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ABSTRACT

This document consists of descriptions of 50 projects that were selected as examples of good practice in providing relevant initial and continuing vocational training to women throughout the European Community regardless of their legal status, employment status, and geographic location. The projects are grouped under six key words (motivation, qualification, integration, equality, anticipation, support) representing the following core issues in promoting equal educational and employment opportunities for men and women: how to encourage women to take up training; how to (re)integrate women into the labor market; how to give women the confidence to take up jobs with responsibility or certain male-dominated jobs; how to anticipate change through training in the event of industrial restructuring; and what support measures to put in place. At least one program from each of the following countries is included: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Each program description contains some or all of the following: training area; industry and/or community partners; funding source(s); target group; contact person; background information about the project's development; key components; attendance rate; and program outcomes. Appended is the text of the joint opinion of European Social Partners on women and training. (MN)

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ED 405 454

WOMEN AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

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50 projects which challenge our traditions

Message from the Commissioner

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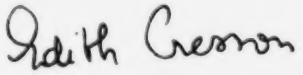
I am delighted that the Social Partners have taken the initiative to produce this «Compendium of good practice».

Maximising women's potential through appropriate training is seen as a vital aspect of Community policy in the work programme currently being launched by the new Commission.

It is interesting to note that it is the Social Partners themselves who have drawn attention to this aspect of vocational training. As key players in the field of training they are well placed to stress the need to make the most of the wide-ranging experience gained throughout the European Union on this issue.

This «Compendium of good practice» provides an excellent introduction to the new vocational training programme, LEONARDO da VINCI, which highlights the objective of promoting equal opportunities for men and women with regard to access to and participation in vocational training. This compendium will help to meet this challenge. The examples contained in it should both provide inspiration and a valuable tool when preparing innovative projects in the framework of the LEONARDO programme.

Edith CRESSON



Enriching dialogue

The relaunch of European Social Dialogue in 1985 by Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission, was followed by the Social Partners' Agreement of 31 October 1991, on the reinforced role they wanted the Intergouvernmental Conference to give them. The Protocol on social policy annexed to the Treaty on European Union very closely matches the Social Partners'initial proposal.

The Social Dialogue at European level between the Union of Industrial and Employers Confederations (UNICE), the European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation (CEEP) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is a unique and important initiative. In addition to organising various events and seminars, the social dialogue has given rise to many "joint opinions", spanning initial and continuing training, information and consultation, the labour market, mobility, adaptability, economic policy and employment.

The joint opinion on "Women and Training" declares that "it is vital that public authorities, the Social Partners and other actors, each according to their own responsibilities, enable and encourage all categories of women to participate in relevant initial and continuing vocational training". This refers to "those entering the labour market for the first time, those in employment at all levels, regardless of legal status, including temporary, part-time and fixed-term contracts, unemployed women, women returners and women in rural areas".

One of the recommendations made by the Social Partners in this opinion relates to the compilation at Community level of a compendium of good practice based on an analysis of experiences gained in the different Member States. The publication of this Compendium has been made possible thanks to the support of the European Commission. The experiences have been compiled by an ad hoc group appointed by the social partners. It is intended for providers of education and training and policy makers in this field.

The aim of this recommendation is to encourage all the partners to better understand and support ways of enabling women to be more effective at work and of preparing them for integration into an increasingly competitive labour market.

The Social Dialogue will continue its progress provided that the social partners

can base their debate on high quality information giving a true picture of the situation in each Member State and, in the framework of their joint opinion, on a better knowledge of the vocational training sector for women.

The production of this compendium is also a good example of the constructive support that the Commission can give to the social partners at European level, helping them to collect information, experiences and innovative practices that can enrich their dialogue.

Thanks are due to all those who were part of the discussion process for the compilation of this compendium, whose assistance made it possible to produce a very useful working document.

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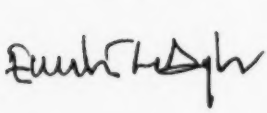
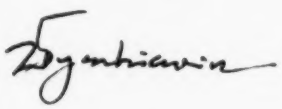
UNICE

Roger Gourvès
CEEP





The methodology followed

The production of this compendium of good practice was a direct response to one of the recommendations in the joint opinion adopted in November 1993 by the European Social Dialogue. The compendium is not intended to be a scientific document, but rather an illustration of the variety of activities possible in the area of training for women. It can stimulate ideas and suggest new possibilities. This is why the language is clear and in a style accessible to a wide audience.

In order to produce this guide, the Social Dialogue set up a working group (ad hoc group) consisting of representatives of UNICE, CEEP and ETUC. Along with the European Commission, this group monitored each step in the compilation of the compendium. It also decided to set up a technical assistance team to help it in this task.

In this compendium of good practice, the ad hoc group has sought to put the spotlight on the main themes identified in the joint opinion on "women and training". The selection of projects is broad. An effort has been made to cover the various groups of women concerned, the various types of training, the different forms of commitment by the Social Partners. The decision was also taken to include projects open not only to women and projects striving to ensure better awareness of the issue of equal opportunities on the cultural level.

The technical team assisting the ad hoc group first had to deal with the problem of collecting information, of 'extracting' experience from the grassroots level. In no country is there a centralised information service on the training of women. It was necessary to call on diverse information sources and networks at European, national and regional levels: employers, trade unionists, researchers, consultants, businesses, public and private bodies.

In all, 104 projects were identified. Each of these projects was then analysed in light of a number of criteria agreed upon by the ad hoc group. These criteria relate to the process, the results (for both women and companies), the transferability of actions....

At the end of this meticulous analysis, 50 projects were selected. They have been grouped under six key words, each representing one of the core issues: how can women be encouraged to take up training?; how can they be (re)integrated into the labour market?; how can women be given the confidence to take up jobs with responsibility or certain male-dominated jobs?; how can change be anticipated through training in the event of industrial restructuring?; what support measures should be put in place?

In reality, the classification of projects under one of these six categories is somewhat arbitrary. Most of the projects tackle several of the core issues. More often than

not, the approach is multidimensional.

All that remained to be done was to write the synopsis of the projects. It is no easy task to put across all the different facets of a project in just a few lines. This is why the decision was taken to emphasise one particular angle, clearly explain the context and highlight the "engineering" of the project. On each occasion, a contact address is given that will help those seeking further information.

Finally, it should be stated that the ad hoc group is not responsible for the information sent to it by the various projects.

This compendium is a first step. A second edition could be put on the drawing board soon. Readers are consequently invited to give their opinions, proposals and any useful information on other good practices.

Clarifying the context

The 50 projects included in the guide have very precise social, political and legislative contexts. They are rooted in a range of instruments and have access to a variety of funding sources. The instruments in question vary to a considerable extent from project to project. They may be Community programmes or initiatives, laws or programmes at national and/or regional levels, interprofessional or intersectoral collective agreements or company-level agreements.

These support instruments tackle the issue of equality of opportunities through various approaches to vocational training. Sometimes, they look at the promotion of equal opportunities in a more general manner, particularly in relation to vocational training. Sometimes, they focus in a more specific way on equality of opportunities in the area of vocational training.

The projects call upon one or other of these instruments, the choice of which may vary in line with the development phase of the initiative.

In the context of this compendium of good practice, it has not been possible to draw up a full catalogue, country by country, of the different political, social and legal instruments. However, in order to give you a clearer picture of the initiatives presented, we have chosen to outline the main instruments in this area.

Community programmes and initiatives

There are three types:

- MAINSTREAM COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD OF TRAINING

* COMETT (industry/university cooperation)
* FORCE (continuing training)
* PETRA (initial training of young people)
* EUROTECNET (projects using innovative methods and techniques).

It should be noted that in 1995, these programmes will be replaced by a single framework programme, LEONARDO DA VINCI. Education programmes, for their part, will be grouped under SOCRATES.

Mention should also be made of the European Centre for Development of Vocational Training, CEDEFOP.

- INSTRUMENTS LINKED TO THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

* The Community Initiative NOW has funded measures, open to women only, in the areas of vocational training and support for business creation. The Employment/NOW Initiative (equal employment opportunities for women) has extended this concept for the period 1994-1999.
Mainstream funding, for which women may apply, is provided by the Employment Initiative strands HORIZON (improving the employment prospects of the disabled and other disadvantaged groups) and YOUTHSTART (promoting labour market integration of young people) and by the ADAPT Initiative (adapting workers to change).

* Regarding the forthcoming Community Support Frameworks (1995-1999), the European Council has adopted a recommendation to the Member States, urging them

to consider women as a "priority group" in the funding of training activities.

- THE IRIS NETWORK

IRIS is a European network of innovative local projects in the area of vocational training for women. One of its key aims is the dissemination of good practice.

National or regional laws / programmes

INSTRUMENTS DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR WOMEN

Laws on equality of opportunity

* In some countries, national laws exist to promote equality of opportunity in the broad sense of the term. For example, information or awareness raising campaigns are funded. Such laws exist in France and Italy.
* In Germany, laws on equality of opportunity fall under the jurisdiction of the Länder. As in other countries where the regions have wide powers (like Italy in the area of employment and training), regional laws on equality of opportunity exist and form part of regional powers.

Specific legislation

Some countries have implemented specific programmes, supporting projects in favour of women in certain precise areas.

* In Germany, pilot projects for the guidance and advice of women are financed at federal level.
* In Luxembourg, a special programme exists in the area of "office automation".
* In Portugal, financial support is granted to training projects conducted by companies taking on women in sectors where they are under-represented. Another programme assists with sanitary alterations in companies taking on women. Finally, child care activities and the creation of businesses by women are supported.
* In France, assistance is available for support measures, guidance, advice and pre-training.

Laws on "positive actions"

This kind of law, covering women in the workplace, exists in all the Member States. They are targeted on public or private companies. They pursue a dual objective: avoiding the unemployment of women in the event of restructuring and promoting the career advancement of women.

Provisions on 'women returners'

In Belgium and the United Kingdom, provisions make it possible to consider women returners as unemployed women, and thus give them access to certain employment/training programmes.

Quotas

In the Netherlands, the pluri-annual Employment Plan lays down a minimum percentage of female participation in training programmes every year.

INSTRUMENTS RELATING TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Belgium and Ireland are the only Community countries with specific measures for women within the general vocational training instruments.

Interprofessional or sectoral collective agreements

AT INTERPROFESSIONAL LEVEL

* In many countries, interprofessional collective agreements exist on training: Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Germany. As a general rule, these interprofessional agreements do not however contain specific provisions on women.

* In Belgium, however, a specific section does exist. The interprofessional agreements signed in 1988 and renewed every two years provide for an employer's contribution (0.17%, later raised to 0.25%, of the wage bill) to fund employment measures. Part of this is earmarked for "risk groups". This money is either allocated to a national fund for employment or used within a professional sector, if a collective agreement exists at this level. The interprofessional agreements re-signed for 1991/1992 include positive actions in favour of women in these "risk groups". For 1993/94, the levy was entirely devoted to child care.

* In Denmark and France, specific interprofessional agreements cover equality of opportunity.

* In Ireland and the United Kingdom, collective agreements do not play a significant role in labour practice.

AT SECTOR LEVEL

In Belgium, Greece, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, sector-based collective agreements exist in the area of vocational training. In Belgium, as just stated, these agreements can cover positive actions.

In-company agreements

The majority of big companies in Europe have a company policy on equality of opportunity or agreements on the training of women.

Other initiatives

Many of the projects contained in the compendium of good practice are based on private initiative or have been set in motion by other types of organisation or institution.

* In Italy, trade union organisations run training courses for women and set up support/advice structures for women wishing to create a cooperative.
* In the Netherlands, nine vocational training centres exist for women. Seven of them are coordinated as a group by women from the trade union confederation.
* In the United Kingdom, there is a strong tradition of delegation to the private sector. Many training bodies, technical colleges and non-profit-making associations run a variety of vocational training activities for women.

A variety of routes...

The 50 projects described in this compendium are not "model initiatives", in so far as they do not offer a miracle cure to all ills. They simply have the merit of touching upon important issues, exploring new paths and illustrating a wide range of possible solutions.

In many areas, the initiatives relate very pertinently to the concerns of the Social Dialogue expressed in the joint opinion "Women and Training". The projects selected are in fact highly beneficial for both employers and employees.

These 50 projects are targeted on unemployed women, women seeking career advancement, women who want to combine job and children, immigrant women.... They are run at local, regional, national or even Community level. They cover a public/private company or a professional sector. They involve trade unions, employers and a wide range of different partners.

The 50 projects respond to very different situations. However, in spite of this diversity they share a number of common features. The results that they achieved give tangible proof of the usefulness of positive actions in promoting equality of opportunity. Above all, these projects demonstrate that vocational training for women is a complex and qualitative process, spanning a number of phases.

A successful project requires a long-term approach, comprising awareness-raising, various types of support and individual monitoring. The 50 projects illustrate that the active involvement of women in each of these phases is a vital ingredient for success. Lastly, they emphasise that vocational training initiatives stand to gain from being part of an integrated initiative for equality of opportunity.

We have pinpointed a number of core ideas among this body of experience, prompting both reflection and action.

Linking the economic and the social

The projects described have one key common feature: a strong tendency to link up the social interests of workers with the economic objectives of employers. When a company decides to invest in the vocational training of women, it only stands to gain: in terms of employee motivation, quality of production or services, financial and sales results....

The social partnership between employers and unions is more than just an asset. It enables more focused objectives, more targeted methods and, last but not least, better results from training.

It is interesting to note that the objectives may evolve in the course of the experience, switching from more economic or technical motives to a more social one. But at the end of the day, the different routes all lead to the same goal. For example, one company saw the resolving of technical issues as the key to improving quality and production. It realised that this called for a questioning and upgrading of the work organisation. In another, the trade union is seeking to open up male dominated jobs to women. The motive was social, but at the end of the project the management was able to note with pleasure a reduction in work accidents within the factory.

Prior identification of needs: a prerequisite for efficiency

Many of the 50 projects undertook a study to identify the issues to be tackled before beginning any training activities. Studies were conducted by consultants hired by the company, research institutes or trade unionists. In some cases, the local labour market was analysed in detail. In others, the various teaching methods were critically compared, or the needs of companies identified so that training could be matched to them.

Participation of women from the outset

In the majority of projects, training initiatives are tailored to the individual needs of women, who enjoy freedom of choice. The participation of women is ranked as a priority, both for the implementation of vocational training activities and at the stage of activity definition. This involvement can be achieved by polls, group discussions or more systematic surveys - the manner has little importance. What is essential is that the women involved can set their own goals and indicate areas of discrimination requiring rectification.

Action with a local base

One common thread runs through the projects: vocational training policies must take account of the local situation and draw on local resources and networks. For some initiatives, the problem lies not with a lack of training but with difficulty in integrating into the labour market. For others, analysis of the local situation reveals new job opportunities or qualifications that respond to new needs, such as rural tourism or the environment.

Not just personal advancement at stake

Many projects help women to map out their career plan, assume more responsibilities and obtain management posts that were previously the reserve of men. But in many instances, the aims are much broader. Both female office employees and workers are helped to have an overall vision of their work, to understand the workings of the company, improve their motivation and personal satisfaction. In some cases, the main aim is avoiding unemployment, by helping women become skilled in new technologies.

Raising personal motivation

Another lesson to be drawn from the projects is that a considerable effort is needed to encourage women back into vocational training. They must be given a little push, to overcome their initial reservations and make allowance for the obstacles ahead. This motivation must be encouraged at secondary school level, determinant for many aspects of later behaviour.

Many projects chose to begin with pre-training designed to overcome prejudices about new technologies, make good any lack in schooling and set women on the tracks of a positive project. This pre-training helps boost the success rate of the training courses.

The priority given to the training of trainers forms part of this step-by-step approach, where care is taken not to "rush things".

More than childcare....

Once the women have actually decided to take a course, their difficulties are not over. They have to muster all their forces if they are not to be thrown off course by various obstacles in their path. Childcare solutions must be found and timetables adjusted to help women combine training and family responsibilities. However, this is not all.

The 50 projects highlight various other kinds of specific support that can be just as useful. If a women works part time, hours in training over her normal working time are paid for. In rural areas, solutions are found to the problem of distance, ensuring that training is as close as possible to the place of work or home.

Several projects used a "contact person" or a "psychological assistance service" to whom women could freely turn in the event of a problem during training.

Post-training assistance

The step between completing training and job search is a difficult one to take. Some projects include "job" data banks, or have systematic contact networks with companies that could offer job openings. Others give former trainees the opportunity to meet again and share their experiences: social isolation is the hardest to bear....

Training courses in business creation are not limited to management or accountancy classes. Women are also given tangible assistance in the set-up phase, through the creation of support and advice centres.

Using the right methods

Women take a different approach from men, for a range of social, cultural and psychological reasons. Some of the projects seek to make allowance for this, adopting specific teaching techniques. In the area of new technologies, for example, global methods were adopted and the trainees encouraged to "analyse a problem from all angles before looking for a solution". Emphasis is consequently placed on group dynamics, listening to what people say, allowing for the different aspects of their personality....

Passing on the message

How can we ensure that vocational training projects for women do not remain isolated initiatives, with no impact on mentalities and policies?

Several projects are striving to weave a network of exchanges between the various initiatives, helping them "learn to learn" and thus pass on the message. For example, women trade unionists train other women to become "Equal Opportunities Officers", or family helps are taught how to train their colleagues in dealing with sexual harassment.

Alongside the implementation of their initiative, many projects have sought to bring about legislative change, to include equality of opportunity in collective bargaining agreements or provoke wide-scale change of certain practices. In one country, an effort is being made to transfer the know-how of "alternative" projects to centres with more traditional responsibility for vocational training. In each company, an attempt is made not just to set up "posi-

tive actions" but to change the overall corporate culture....

In order to boost the "snowball effect", many projects extend the partnership to associations, local authorities, university institutes or training centres.

An investment for the future

In many projects, an attempt is made to draw men into the change of mentalities and practices in the company. In one public enterprise, every new employee must take a course including an "Equality of Opportunity" module. Other examples show that training designed for women can also produce changes advantageous for men too or test methods benefiting both sexes. In any event, equality of opportunity is also a matter for men and investment in training for women is an excellent way of injecting innovation into the overall vocational training environment.

1. MOTIVATION

From business management... to relaxation classes

Vocational training involves much more than a simple transfer of knowledge. It must take into account an individual's personality, play on the group dynamic and tie in activities with local social needs. This, at heart, is the philosophy of the "FERNANDA" project, established in the Oporto region.

The vocational training programme "FERNANDA", implemented by the Commission for the Social Position of Women-Oporto Division and financed by the European Social Fund, was launched in 1986. The programme is therefore "old", but its philosophy continues to be highly innovative at a time when approaches are increasingly technical and fragmented.

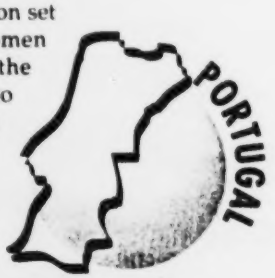
"FERNANDA" deliberately puts emphasis on a global and integrated approach to training. Priority is given to linking the training process to local development, to the relationships between the individual and the group and to taking into account the various elements of women's personalities.

Concretely, the project is targeted on women from the Oporto region who are poorly qualified and have no recognised work status. These women are not however totally unskilled for they make craft products. The aim is to encourage them to set up a cooperative business, the only way for them to create their own employment.

Initially, the Oporto Commission set out to identify groups of women suitable for participation in the project. Steps were then taken to make the women in each group aware of the difficulties of their situation and to find alternatives to it. Training followed, in the form of theory classes and practical experience.

In all, 27 women have taken the course, which is split into two parts: production management and marketing management. During the course, various activities were organised to prepare the women trainees "psychologically" for the exercising of responsibility. Subjects such as time management, decision-making and relations with customers and suppliers were covered, with the support of a technical team seconded from the University of Oporto.

During the course, a number of evening activities were organised. Trainees could take part in dance, singing, drama or relaxation classes. Information sessions were even held to discuss the concepts of female sexuality and family planning....



Oporto Region

TRAINING AREA

Training of women for self-employment. Emphasis is placed on the collective and social dimensions of training.

PARTNERS

Commission for the Social Position of Women-Oporto Division

FUNDING

European Social Fund

TARGET GROUP

Unemployed Women, skilled in the making of crafts

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15% female employees, 75% female participation

The management of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) in Ireland has launched a positive action programme in the area of equality of opportunity. Two training courses are available to women employees to help them boost their career potential. The training take-up rate has been very high, with 75% of women employees participating in the programme.

The ESB is a partly public-owned company with responsibility for the generation and distribution of electricity within the Irish Republic. It has over 9,000 employees, only 15% of whom are women. The explanation is that much of the work is of a technical nature, traditionally the domain of men.

In 1988, the company management adopted an Equal Opportunities Policy and a Code of Practice. However, this policy statement still had to make the transition from theory to reality. This was achieved two years later, with the adoption of an action programme for the implementation of 26 recommendations. A new post of Equal Opportunities manager, and soon after a complete team, was created under the Personnel Director, to coordinate an Advisory Council on Equality.

In 1991, two training courses were launched for women employees. Initially earmarked for office and administrative staff, they were rapidly opened up to all categories of women employees, both full-time and part-time.

The women take part initially in a "Career Development Programme". One year later, they are invited to continue with a "Personal Effectiveness Programme". Each programme lasts for two days, with a follow-on day three months later.

The high attendance rate is the most striking feature of these programmes. Between 1991 and 1994, 932 women attended the first course and 663 the second. Three-quarters of women employees have therefore attended one or other of the courses.

The programmes have worked so well with women that the company decided to extend them to men. As a consequence, 23 two-day seminars were organised, with groups of 8 women and 8 men from the same department but from a cross-section of categories. The aim of this mixed training is to change negative and stereotypical attitudes regarding women in the workplace.

Another interesting initiative: the ESB awards grants to staff members to take training courses outside the company. In 1993, 65% of the beneficiaries were women.

TRAINING AREA

Training courses designed to boost self-confidence and encourage career advancement within the company

PARTNERS

Electricity Supply Board

FUNDING

Electricity Supply Board

TARGET GROUP

Women employees of the company

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Overcoming uncertainty about new technologies

How can women's uncertainty about learning new technologies, and in particular telecommunication techniques, be overcome? The DIMITRA association in Larissa has developed tailor-made teaching methods, in line with the individual needs and situations of young women trainees.

New information technologies, particularly telecommunications, are in a phase of wide expansion in Greece. The results of this growth are paradoxical. On the one hand, new technologies create unemployment by making some jobs obsolete. On the other, companies have problems finding skilled staff who can master the latest technologies.

When jobs are cut, women are often the first to go. In Greece, they are wary about learning to use the most advanced technologies. What are the reasons for this and how can it be overcome?

In Larissa, in the region of Thessaloniki, the non-profit association DIMITRA is specialised in vocational training, targeted in several sectors (business creation, tourism, rural development...) and intended for young unemployed people with a secondary school certificate.

Some of its courses are exclusively for young women. One such example is the introductory course to new technologies, established in 1992 and 1993. Twenty Greek women have taken the course, supported by the NOW Community initiative.

The original intention was to recruit women trainers. Due to an absence of female applicants with the necessary skills, DIMITRA has worked with male trainers. Unusually, however, the association insisted that they be given preliminary training in equal opportunities issues.

This is because for telecommunications techniques to be learnt successfully, allowance must be made for the difficulties faced by women. New methods were thus defined and adapted to the individual situation and requirements of the trainees.

Throughout the course, an attempt was thus made to teach young women to "analyse a problem from all angles before looking for a solution". The training material was designed in such a way as to ensure a positive and user friendly environment for the trainees. Finally, care was taken not to separate theory and practice, with the emphasis placed on workshops enabling better pupil-teacher relations.

Larissa, region of The saloniki

TRAINING AREA

Introduction to telecommunications techniques using methods tailor-made to women trainees

PARTNERS

DIMITRA worked in collaboration with training centres in Belgium, Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom

FUNDING

- Youth Secretariat General
- General Secretariat for Secular Training
- NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Young unemployed women with secondary school education

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"Equal Opportunities Officers"

The Portuguese union UGT provides women members with training as "equal opportunities officers". These women then go on to train others. This system is weaving a network of tangible initiatives throughout the country. The project is a way of "relaying" skills to new generations of women trade unionists.

The project started with a socio-economic study in the region of Lisbon and the Tagus valley. Its aim was to quantify the problems and subsequently identify what action could be taken in response to these. This central region of Portugal, with 3.3 million inhabitants, is slightly more prosperous than the rest of the country. For example, 30% growth was registered in female employment in companies between 1982 and 1992.

At the same time, however, more women occupy part-time or temporary jobs than men. They are more vulnerable to unemployment, particularly long-term. More of them are illiterate. These problems are exacerbated by social evolution, with a growing number of divorces and one-parent families....

To help change this situation, the Portuguese union UGT has pinned its hopes on a "filtering down" effect, training women trade unionists as "equality officers".

A first group of 11 women trade unionists, the majority of whom were under 25, took the course in 1993. It was split into 150 hours of theory and 150 hours of practice. On completion of this, concrete action projects were launched.

In a second phase, women in the training group coming from a different part of Portugal (Oporto, Santarem, Castelo Branco...) were asked to train other "officers" in their home region who could then take action within the trade union or company.

The aim is now to establish a network between these various decentralised projects. Data bases of experiences and contacts have already been established. Work is under way on the definition of joint criteria and methodology for the projects, improving the efficiency of evaluation.

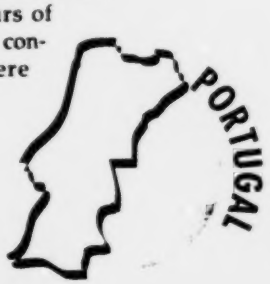
At the UGT headquarters, emphasis is also placed on the priority given in this project to young women trade unionists, stressing the vital importance of "relaying skills to new generations of women trade unionists".

TRAINING AREA

Training of "Equal Opportunities Officers" who take action in companies or within trade union organisations

PARTNERS

The project is run on behalf of the UGT by the Trade Union Training Institute, ISEFOC. In an international partnership, it has been implemented with Spanish UGT trade unions and Commissions of Women Workers.



Lisbon and Tagus Valley and, gradually, the rest of the country

FUNDING

NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Young female trade unionists

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Care of the elderly: upgrading a thankless profession

Working conditions are particularly arduous in old people's homes. The majority of staff are women. At the "Saint-Joseph" home in Liège, training is given to help carers cope with their difficult profession. This seeks to alleviate the problems of backache and stress that carers often experience.

In Belgium, the majority of employees of old people's homes are women. Their predominance is not however by vocation. Salaries are so low and working conditions so difficult that very few men will accept such jobs.

How can the profession of carer be upgraded, thus guaranteeing better equality of opportunity? The "Saint-Joseph" old people's home in Liège has launched a pilot project. In February 1992, the management of the home and the two trade unions signed an agreement defining the aims of staff training. Thanks to this agreement, the home has been eligible for aid from the "Employment Fund" (managed by the Ministry of Employment and Labour) on the basis of the "positive actions plan".

A staff survey identified the key issues and these then guided the training offered. The primary problem consists of the backache suffered by the home's women carers, who have to lift disabled people several times a day. Back problems lie behind a great deal of absenteeism. They prompt many women, physically unable to go on, to ask for career breaks or part-time hours. Such options reduce even further their already very low earnings.

As a result, all the staff of "Saint Joseph" have taken part in a course on ergonomics, to help them move heavy objects more easily, without reducing the comfort of the elderly people. This course includes experience of new materials and the training of individuals, in each area of care, capable of demonstrating the right techniques to others.

Another course, implemented following the agreement between the social partners, seeks to prepare carers for difficult situations such as the death of elderly residents or very trying conditions such as Alzheimer's disease. Generally speaking, older nurses tend to work in old people's homes. At the time they were trained, less emphasis was placed on the emotional aspects of the profession.

Liège

TRAINING AREA

The course seeks to upgrade a low-value profession, in a sector largely dominated by women. It takes into consideration the health problems of the women workers and the emotional aspects of their contact with elderly people.

PARTNERS

The trade union organisations and management of the "Saint-Joseph" old people's home in Liège

FUNDING

The "positive actions plan" of the Employment Fund, managed by the Ministry of Employment and Labour. Contribution calculated as a percent age of the wage bill.

TARGET GROUP

Staff of an old people's home

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Equality of opportunity on the right tracks

The Danish railway company has engaged a consultant to promote equal opportunities within the enterprise. A course helps office workers to re-think their work organisation in a more participatory manner. The project, initially launched in three departments, has now been extended to the whole company.

The Danish railway company (DSB) is a State company with around 20,500 employees. Men make up the bulk of the workforce. The average representation of women at DSB is 18%, falling to 6% in managerial posts.

DSB has its own training department, recently joined by a consultant with the specific task of promoting "equal opportunities within the company". The collaboration between the consultant and the internal training department has resulted in a number of initiatives with a more specifically female focus.

The first project relates to office staff. First run on an experimental basis in three of the company's departments, this course involves 16 employees, 14 of whom are women. The aim is to help office workers re-think their attitudes and work organisation, following the integration of new technologies.

The course, spread over six months, includes eight days of training, two of which are residential. An attempt is made to boost employees' self-confidence. Among other things, the emphasis is placed on forming networks of contacts and cooperation. Each participant is helped to draw up a personal action plan.

Throughout the process, a steering committee, including staff representatives, monitored the smooth implementation of the project. This committee had the task of extending the experience within the company. It has achieved this, with nearly 100 women taking the course last year.

The Danish railway company has at the same time run another course, designed to encourage the promotion of women to managerial posts. While it registered a success on the participation level - with 43% of women taking the course -the practical results are more mixed for, at the end of the experiment, only two women had succeeded in progressing to jobs with greater responsibility. Those behind the project have drawn conclusions from this partial failure. Training alone is not enough to improve the career progress of women. It is also necessary, they judge, to help women in concrete ways to combine their new job and their family responsibilities...

TRAINING AREA

Training in a new work organisation

PARTNERS

The Danish railway company, DSB
Collaboration, for the training course for office workers, with the ATHENE ApS consultancy.
Participation of staff representatives in the steering committee

TARGET GROUP

Female office workers

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Step one: listening to people

The region of Emilia Romagna established a training course for 14 women who are career guidance officers. The course aimed to help them take a new approach, beginning with listening to the people they meet. The central idea is that career direction should be the consequence of free and autonomous choices and should involve the active participation of women in difficulty.

The region of Emilia Romagna launched this initiative in the framework of the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (IMPs). The actual training was entrusted to SINFORM, a consortium of regional vocational training bodies, in collaboration with the Vocational Training Department, the Labour College and the University of the Emilia-Romagna Region.

The course was directed at women employees in the Region's various specialised career guidance centres. The aim was to involve them in the definition of a common methodology.

The central tenet of the training project was that women should be helped to make free and autonomous choices. Women must map out their own career path, in line with their specific needs and aims in life.

Only after clarifying the wishes of women should the guidance service give information on existing work or training possibilities.

This way of proceeding is a change on the usual methods of a guidance centre, where more often than not personal choices are subordinate to the professional options proposed by guidance officers. In the Emilia Romagna project, listening to the individual is a key element. One-to-one dialogue and participation of the individual in the career guidance process are key.

The course ran from October to December 1993. It involved 14 women career guidance officers from Emilia Romagna. The training staff came from the University of Bologna and various public training institutes.

The course is split into six modules. First of all, participants are encouraged to debate their personal motivations. The barriers which women come up against in their career development were then tackled. The course participants next worked on the definition of a methodological model. Finally, a tangible work project was designed and implemented in the field.

Emilia Romagna

TRAINING AREA

Definition of a common approach to vocational training, involving prior analysis of women's own wishes

TARGET GROUP

Women career guidance officers

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PARTNERS

Emilia Romagna Region, University of Bologna...

FUNDING

Integrated Mediterranean Programmes

When women cleaners take the floor

In Ireland, women working in the cleaning sector suffer from low self-esteem. Employers and trade unions sat down around the same table to see just where the problems lay. This pilot project culminated in a number of concrete recommendations.

The cleaning sector in Ireland employs 20,000 people spread between 200 companies. Many of these employees are women on part-time contracts. A number of reports have indicated that these women suffer from very low self-esteem.

No-one was therefore satisfied. Neither the cleaners, who had no job satisfaction, nor the employers, who could not develop the full potential of their employees.

The social partners decided to try to pinpoint the problems. The trade union organisations (Services, Industrial, Professional, Technical Union) and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation put their heads together.

They jointly set up a pilot project involving 143 women from six cleaning companies. The latter took four training modules, related to the problems to be analysed: development of positive self-esteem, motivation of women workers, improvement of working relationships, identification of problems specific to women, and proposals for solutions. The social partners were actively involved in the discussion of each module and at each level of the programme.

The women thus had the opportunity to identify issues and make their own recommendations for changes in their immediate work environment and in the cleaning sector in general. Major recommendations were made in the areas of training, childcare, recruitment and promotion policy, work safety, work flexibility and mobility, work standards and quality and equality between men and women, to name but a few.

In all, 41 recommendations were made. They have provided discussion material for the social partners. 26 recommendations have already been implemented in the sector's companies and seven more are under review.

Dublin

TRAINING AREA

Improving self-esteem and personal development

PARTNERS

Irish Business and Employers Confederation and various trade union organisations (Services, Industrial, Professional, Technical)

FUNDING

The Community Initiative NOW

TARGET GROUP

Employees of six cleaning companies

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Changing corporate culture

ENEL pursues an active policy of equal opportunities, with the aim of profoundly changing corporate culture. It strives to change the mentality of employees on their entry to the company. Secretaries are given special training to help them approach their work in a more active and professional manner.

At ENEL, the Italian public electricity board, now in the throes of privatisation, only a very small proportion of the workforce are women: 9.7% of the total. For the most part, the women hold exclusively administrative posts.

In the last few years, awareness has been growing of the need to change this situation. In 1986, a national Commission to promote equal opportunities was set up, including representatives of management and trade union organisations. This Commission provided the impetus for local delegations in each region. At the time, women only made up 8% of ENEL's staff.

A collective agreement between the various social partners defined the various aims in the area of equal opportunities. A wide range of measures are in place, covering information, training and also advantageous social schemes for ENEL's women employees, such as full pay during maternity leave.

ENEL's action forms part of a rational policy to instigate change, by influencing the corporate culture. ENEL is also counting on the snowball effect, whereby the youngest employees help change attitudes.

At ENEL, all new graduates joining the company start out by taking a special training course. This course includes a module on "equality of opportunity". Regardless of their sex, the new employees are informed about the working conditions of women, the legislation on equal opportunities and company policy in favour of equality.

White collar women employees at ENEL are given the same training courses as their male colleagues. On the other hand, special courses have been set up for women secretaries. They aim to foster a new approach to the profession of secretary less mechanical and more participatory. Three four-day modules are offered on different themes: the role of a secretary, work instruments and professional identity. 300 women received training in 1993.

This last project, an initiative of the National Equal Opportunities Commission was supported by both ENEL's human resources management and the trade unions. As a positive equal opportunities action, the project receives partial subsidies from the Italian Ministry of Employment in the framework of law 125/1991 financing initiatives in favour of women.

All regions

TRAINING AREA

Training to improve equality of opportunities at all levels of the company

TARGET GROUP

New graduate employees, both men and women
Secretaries

PARTNERS

Action taken following agreements between the management and trade unions of ENEL, on a proposal from the Equal Opportunities Commission

FUNDING

ENEL
For the course for secretaries, the Ministry of Employment, pursuant to law 125/1991

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Recipes for involving women in trade union activity

The General Municipal Boilermakers (GMB) union in the United Kingdom has launched a series of initiatives to encourage greater involvement of women in its organisation. To motivate women, the starting point is issues of personal concern.

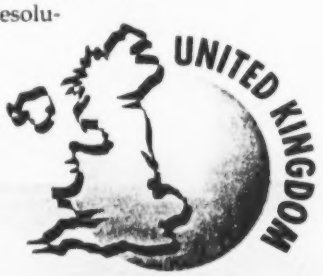
The unions grouped within the General Municipal Boilerworkers (GMB) Union in the United Kingdom have set up a number of training activities designed to promote equality of opportunities within the organisation. The aim is to encourage women to take a more active role in trade union activity. In an attempt to boost their motivation, a series of meetings and training activities were organised, starting with issues of direct relevance to women.

In this context, various initiatives have been taken by the GMB.

Three courses, tackling among other things stress management and sexual harassment, have been organised for 49 women seamstresses or production line workers.

In the regions of Merseyside, Wales and Ireland, around 90 women trade unionists, from various sectors, have been involved in training courses. Subjects have included communication and negotiation in the workplace and the importance of collective bargaining agreements. The method chosen is rooted in analysis of actual case studies and the practical resolution of existing problems.

In Runcorn, Merseyside, the regional section of GMB has run regular meetings with groups of 12 women. They attempt to draw in women who otherwise would not take part in trade union meetings. Several subjects have been discussed, such as how to ensure better recognition of women working part-time, how better maternity leave provisions can be guaranteed or improved benefits achieved.



TRAINING AREA

Training to boost women's involvement in the trade union organisation

PARTNERS

General Municipal Boilermakers Allied Trade Unions

TARGET GROUP

Women trade unionists

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2 QUALIFICATION

Tradesmen's wives: doing work that counts

In France, spouses who are partners in a small business are entitled to legal protection. The work of assistant is thus officially recognised. What is more, a training course culminating in a certificate at baccalauréat level has been set up to help upgrade their professional status.

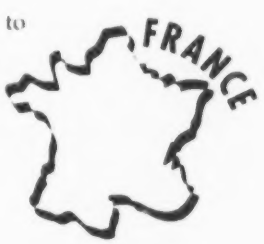
France has 800,000 people, that is 800,000 businesses spanning 350 professions: from the food sector (butcher...), to building (plumber), transport (mechanic...), clothing (tailor...) or the service sector (florists, hairdressers...).

The majority of these tradespeople are men. Often however they are actively assisted in the running of the business by their wives or other female family members. Until 1982, this assistance received no recognition in law or social security. Wives of tradesmen were considered as housewives. For example, they had no pension rights and were just seen as beneficiaries of their husbands. In the event of divorce or death, they found themselves destitute.

In 1982, the spouses of tradesmen were awarded legal status. They can now register with the Guild Chamber and thus represent the business. Men and women can both contribute to their own pension fund, in proportions that they themselves decide. In the event of death, the survivor has a preferential right in the business succession.

In order to encourage women to take up this status and boost their skills, a group of tradesmen's assistants set up a special training course via the Guild Chamber. The first classes were run in 1989. They revolve around four modules: communication, management, secretariat, marketing techniques. They help women assume responsibilities within the business. The course culminates in the "Auxiliary to the Head of a Craft Business" certificate, a diploma officially recognised at baccalaureat level.

This principle has made slow headway. The craft sector is not very open to working women. Despite this, 70 of the 104 Guild Chambers have introduced the course. Participation rates are also high. In Mayenne, 98% of the women with this status are taking the course. The number of graduates is steadily growing: 2 for all of France in 1990, 164 in 1993. At present 1125 people are taking at least one of the four modules.



TRAINING AREA

Qualification and recognition of the skills acquired on the job by the award of a separate legal status

PARTNERS

70 French Guild Chambers

FUNDING

In most cases, Regional Councils in association with the Craft Training Insurance Fund (FAF)

TARGET GROUP

Female collaborators in craft businesses

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Environmental experts: a new job opportunity

A new profession has emerged in Germany: that of environmental expert. Women appear to be particularly gifted at this profession, which requires a good sense of analysis. In Bonn, a private company has set up a training course enabling unemployed women to gain access to this new qualification. The course is recognised at European level.

EPS is a private consultancy, specialised in environmental issues and based in Bonn. In 1991, it began research in several big German companies, with the cooperation of various partners, including the Federal Vocational Training Institute.

This research reached a number of conclusions. The first was that a need is emerging in companies to recruit environmental experts. These experts should have full knowledge of the new federal and European legislation in this area and should be able to analyse environmental issues, placing them in their social or economic context. This new profession thus constitutes a potential source of employment.

Second conclusion: women are particularly gifted at the exercise of this new expertise. They take a different approach to problems. They are capable of breaking down a situation into its various facets.

Following this research, at the end of 1991 the EPS set up a course for "environmental experts". This course, assisted by the European programmes NOW, HORIZON and EUROFORM, runs for 52 weeks and consists of theoretical classes and in-company practicals. Although the course is mixed, the majority of its participants are unemployed women with a university degree.

The course devotes a great deal of time to Community legislation on the environment. It enjoys European recognition.

Of the 28 women who took the first training course, around half succeeded in finding a job relatively quickly. A prime concern of the EPS is the transition between the course and the finding of a job in the same sector. The consultancy is considering setting up its own recruitment agency for this purpose. Women completing the course could then apply to the agency. With the same aim in mind, the consultancy painstakingly tries to establish close contacts with all the big companies in the region.

TRAINING AREA

Training of "environment experts"

PARTNERS

Federal Employment Office, large companies in the Land

FUNDING

Financial support under the Community Initiatives NOW, HORIZON and EUROFORM

TARGET GROUP

Unemployed women university graduates

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Painting your way to a European qualification

The Camden Training Centre in London aims to train women in traditionally male sectors such as painting and decoration. A progressive assessment method has been developed, enabling trainees to achieve competence in each of the modules. At the end of the course, successful participants are awarded a European Vocational Qualification.

Camden Training Centre was opened in 1982. It is a registered charity, based in London, and focuses on unemployed women of all ages, especially women returning to the labour market after a number of years bringing up children. Its trainees have few career prospects. Women with disabilities and women from ethnic minorities are also targeted.

The Centre has set up tailor-made training, concentrated on a traditionally male sector: painting and decoration. Alongside specialist techniques in painting on walls, wood and iron surfaces, an important part of the course consists in boosting women's self-confidence and skills. The course also includes basic training in a second European language and enterprise training.

Course participants were given both theoretical and practical training. Systematically, the knowledge dispensed in the classroom was backed up by placements where they could put their new skills into practice and build up a portfolio for later presentation to potential employers.

These portfolios were of high quality. The programme established a new progressive assessment method enabling trainees to have a clear picture of their evolution. In line with this, they could dip into the differen modules to complete their skills. The ain was that at the end of the programme al the trainees be awarded a new Europea Vocational Qualification validated by th City and Guilds of London Institute.

The programme attained its goals. The 1 participants all received the new Europea Vocational Qualification. Even more pos tively, nearly all are now in work. Tw women entered employment and seve went into self-employment. Three other went into further education. The remair ing three have either emigrated or move from the area.

London

TRAINING AREA

Raising motivation and boosting personal growth

PARTNERS

Camden Training Centre

FUNDING

NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Unemployed women wishing to return to the labour market after long maternity leave and/or time spent bringing u children

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Tapping everyday social skills

The Training Centre for Women, Families and One-Parent Families in Luxembourg trains childminders and family helps. The aim is to give women, with little prior training, access to a qualification that draws on the social skills acquired through everyday experience.

The Training Centre for Women, Families and One-Parent Families (CFFM) is targeted on women rejoining the labour market after parental leave. Without qualifications, they stand little chance of finding a job. In the hope of opening new doors, the CFFM set up in 1993 a training course for auxiliaries in establishments for children and adolescents.

The project does not require the women to learn a profession from scratch. On the contrary, it draws to a large extent on the personal skills acquired through everyday experience. The aim is to develop new professional profiles by drawing on family tasks. Training in childcare is also given in the programme.

Twelve women took part in the pilot project, selected on the basis of one-to-one interviews. Age, training or social background had no importance. The only requirement was having brought up children for a number of years. They also had to be committed to extending these skills as part of their (re-)integration into the labour market.

The theory (120 hours) was spread over six weeks, from October 18 to December 10, 1993. Motivation, the acquisition of new qualifications and in particular the development of existing social skills were the key themes. They had to re-learn how to learn and get (re-)acquainted with the world of work. The training was then completed by 20 hours of practical experience. An effort was made to encourage the women to continue their training after completion of the course.

The drop-out rate was low. Shortly before the seminar began, two women dropped out for health reasons; another left the group after 4 weeks because she had just found a job. As for the others, some found a job once they had completed the course. One woman is working with sick children, another doing social work with underprivileged families, a third helping children who have fallen behind at school.

TRAINING AREA

Re-qualification and the development of self-confidence through the recognition of the professional value of family skills.

PARTNERS

The Training Centre for Women, Families and One-Parent Families (CFFM)

FUNDING

NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Women wishing to return to the job market after a long period on maternity leave and/or spent bringing up children.

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Desperately seeking secretaries

On the island of Réunion, many job offers in the secretarial domain remain vacant because few people have the skills to fill them. This situation gave rise to the idea of setting up a specific training course for young women looking for their first job.

Several studies conducted by the Réunion Interprofessional Association for Integration and Continuing Training (ARIFOC) reached the conclusion that the island of Réunion suffers from a lack of qualified secretaries. Despite growing demand from employers, few people have the skills required to reply to job offers.

There are several reasons for this. Firstly, Réunion has had to adjust itself to growing international competition. Companies have transformed themselves from small-scale family concerns to a more structured organisation. In order to free the management for other tasks, administrative jobs were set up. Secondly, a key cultural factor, many men refuse to let their wives work. Finally, very little training is available in Réunion. Training places in office automation are few and far between.

In addition, the average age of baccalauréat graduates is higher than in Europe. As a consequence, young women tend to look for a job straight after their baccalauréat instead of seeking further high quality training. In short, the lack of secretaries is desperate, particularly since the best of them rapidly move on to supervisory posts, without being replaced.

In response to this situation, ARIFOC, after consulting the trade unions, set up a Specialised Secretarial Institute. Its course (1,400 hours culminating in a certificate) is taken by young women job-seekers who have completed their baccalauréat. The latter then sign a "qualification contract". The Institute gives them access to a qualification similar to that of supervisor through combined work and training: three weeks in company, one week in the training centre.

Launched in 1993, the programme will be concluded in 1995. In the meanwhile, results have far outstripped forecasts. 80% of the young people who took the course have been offered a permanent contract with pay at higher rates than usually offered for this type of post.

The island of Réunion

TRAINING AREA

Integration in the labour market through encouragement to take a training course in a sector with a serious shortage of qualified staff.

PARTNERS

The Réunion Interprofessional Association for Integration and Continuing Training (ARIFOC), in association with trade union organisations (CGT, CFDT, FO)

FUNDING

The companies, via an approved mutualist organisation

TARGET GROUP

Women joining the labour market for the first time

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New skills in tourism

To move up the career ladder, women employed in travel agencies must acquire new skills, particularly in the area of work organisation. The Bremen Training Centre has trained 14 women with this aim. The initiative has moreover resulted in an officially recognised qualification.

The tourism sector in Germany looks set to grow. However, in travel agencies women mostly carry out instructions or fulfil purely administrative tasks. For them to take full advantage of the opportunities in this sector and move up the career ladder, they must extend their qualifications.

This was the goal pursued by the project "PLUS: Women Travel Agents". It was intended for women with intermediate-level schooling and a few years of professional experience. The aim was to prepare them for middle or top level posts in agencies, or even prompt them to create their own agency.

The linchpin of the project was the Bremen Training Centre, a state-approved private body joined by several partners, including trade union organisations. The actual training got under way in February 1992 and was completed in January 1994. It included both theory and practice, with six months' work in travel agencies. 14 women took the course, with an average age of 30.

The content and methods were very carefully defined. The course combined the learning of sophisticated techniques with the teaching of work organisation skills. For example, it emerged that "the ability to work independently, flexibility, and problem-solving skills" are key qualifications in the tourism sector.

The project has two key novel features. The first is its decidedly transnational nature. A similar course has been run in Valencia, Spain. Training periods in Spain formed an integral part of the course for German trainees.

The second originality is that the "travel agents" course culminated in a recognised qualification. At the end of the course, the trainees took an exam at the Bremen Chamber of Commerce which has officially sanctioned the training provided.

Bremen

TRAINING AREA

Prepare these women for the assumption of greater responsibilities in the tourism sector

PARTNERS

Bremen Training Centre in collaboration with the DGB union and the Chamber of Commerce. Transnational partnership with the Valencia Chamber of Commerce in Spain.

FUNDING

NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Young women with intermediate-level schooling and a few years of professional experience

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3. INTEGRATION

Architecture and the environment: killing two birds with one stone

Local and regional authorities in Spain want to work with a new breed of architects, familiar with environmental technologies. To respond to this demand, the Council of Architects has organised training courses for women architects, in four towns situated in disadvantaged areas.

In Spain, unemployment cuts across all social categories of women. Architects, once thought to be in a privileged position, are also experiencing difficulties in finding work. However, potential employment sources do exist, in new market niches like "environmental technologies". Strong demand is in fact emerging within local and regional authorities for architects who can integrate environmental parameters into their work.

In response to this situation, the Higher Council of Architecture Colleges in Spain has created a course in "environmental technologies", designed for unemployed women architects.

The course ran in 1993 and 1994 in four towns - Malaga, Seville, Murcia, Caceres - situated in areas with development problems. It enjoyed substantial participation - 128 women in all.

The course was split into five 40-hour modules. Subjects covered included the computerisation of cartographic data and techniques for evaluating the environmental impact of an architectural project. One module consisted of practical information on setting up a business.

The project kills two birds with one stone. It responds to the public need for protection of the environment and offers work to those without it.

The course in "environment technologies" has received financial backing from the European NOW Initiative. A partnership has been created with an association of architects in Florence, Italy. Through this cooperation, exchanges of trainers have taken place between the two countries.

The Higher Council of Spanish architects has made an effort to interest high-level architectural colleges in the project. As a consequence, the course is recognised at European level and is being considered for the Spanish title of Ph.D. in architecture.

Seville, Malaga, Murcia, Caceres

TRAINING AREA

Training in the new environment technologies, a niche particularly to interesting local and regional authorities

PARTNERS

The regional governments, women's institutes, architecture colleges. European cooperation with the association of architects in Florence, Italy.

FUNDING

NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Out-of-work women architects

CONTACT

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Step by step to a qualification

In Düsseldorf, unqualified women enjoy access to training as a nursing auxiliary or nurse and are paid a salary during training. Another remarkable feature is the progressive approach taken, helping women overcome the difficulties that arise along the way.

The initiative for the project came from the "Zukunfts Werkstatt" in Düsseldorf, a limited liability company set up in 1989 to establish vocational training projects for unemployed men and women. The city of Düsseldorf holds half the capital in this company, with the remainder split between the Employment Bureau and various charitable organisations.

The project is open to women aged over 25, out of work, unqualified and bringing up children, in many cases alone. They are offered the opportunity to train as nursing auxiliaries or nurses, fields where many openings exist. Although these women do not have the usual schooling background, they are offered an apprenticeship contract in collaboration with old people's homes. During this apprenticeship, they are paid 85% of the normal salary. Registration is free. Childcare solutions are found by the "Zukunfts Werkstatt".

One striking feature is the gradual approach implemented to take account of the women's own difficulties. The training begins with four weeks' guidance, testing the motivations of future trainees. Next comes six months of training culminating in qualification as a nursing auxiliary. If they wish, the women can then continue their training (another 3 years) to become a nurse.

Throughout the training, the women have access to a psychological assistance service and can refer to it whenever a problem arises. For example, some women are tempted to give up because they feel guilty about leaving their children or taking less care of their husband....

In the first group of 17 women, 11 successfully completed the guidance phase and are qualified as nursing auxiliaries. Of these 11 women, two have chosen to work and nine to continue their nursing training.... Finally, it should be noted that this project was assisted by the Community Initiative NOW. This financial support has now ended, but the project is continuing to operate successfully.

Düsseldorf

TRAINING AREA

Training of these women as nursing auxiliaries or nurses

PARTNERS

The city of Düsseldorf, charitable organisations...

FUNDING

- The Land of Nord Rhein Westphalen
- The Federal Institute for Employment
- The city of Düsseldorf
- The Community Initiative NOW

TARGET GROUP

Housewives or long-term unemployed women with no qualifications

CONTACT

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Encouraging self-employment in rural areas

The Spanish Union of Workers' Commissions (CCOO) is creating training courses for women in rural areas in six Spanish Autonomous Communities. The courses are integrated: they are designed to meet tangible local needs, revolve around the transfer of knowledge and assistance with business creation, and are situated in a network perspective.

The origins of the project date back to 1992, when the Confederate Secretariat of Women's Affairs of the union of Workers' Commissions (CCOO) set up, through its FOREM foundation, the first training project for women in rural areas. Projects were then launched in four Spanish provinces, with the financial support of the Ministry for Social Affairs.

The initiative was expanded in 1993 thanks to support from the Ministry. It took the form of a programme with 14 pilot activities, in six Spanish Autonomous Communities. This programme got under way in 1994.

The courses are open to women without work, in an unstable job or working in the black economy. In all, 270 women were to take part. The courses include a compulsory minimum of 200 to 250 training hours.

Their originality lies in their integrated nature. Training sectors are chosen on the basis of the real possibilities existing in a given region. The courses do not aim simply to be a source of qualifications: women are also helped to create their own job, found or consolidate their own business. The initiative works in partnership with local associations and authorities, drawing on their respective skills.

In Galicia, Aragon and Castilla León, the courses relate to tourism, for example. In the other Autonomous Communities, they are in the textile sector, a sector where many companies have closed and where undeclared work is rife.

In Santander, training seeks to support the women workers of a cooperative threatened with closure. Staff members are being taught to repair and service the machinery. Other cooperatives and experts are called in to resolve specific legal problems. In Valencia and on the outskirts of Madrid, projects involve women just made redundant from a textile factory.

The workers' commissions are striving to build a network between the various training activities. This allows the definition of common methods and the constant exchange of different experiences.

Six Autonomous Communities.

TRAINING AREA

Training courses defined in line with local potential and including support for self-employment.

PARTNERS

In each of the intervention areas, the workers' commissions seek to cooperate with associations and local authorities.

FUNDING

Ministry of Social Affairs

TARGET GROUP

Women in rural areas who are either unemployed or in an unstable job

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Overcoming wariness to new technologies

The Catalan Institute of Technology is organising pre-training in new technologies. The participants are women who wish to go back to work after having devoted their attention to the family. The Institute would now like to see this type of training made available on a larger scale by other institutions and localities.

Micro-electronics, information technologies, telecommunications, biotechnology: these new technologies offer great promise for future employment.

But can those out of work fill the new posts in these areas? How can we ensure that unemployed people are not once again left by the wayside? These are delicate questions.... What is certain is that high tech jobs require both sophisticated qualifications and also new values, new attitudes to work. Women - for social, cultural and historic reasons - have difficulties adapting and are particularly wary of new technologies.

The Catalan Institute of Technology believes that unemployed women can only be successfully integrated in a new sector by making a special effort on the training front. It therefore launched its project of pre-training designed to make women more aware of new technologies.

The women taking part in this pre-training are over 25 and have been unemployed for over a year. They are educated to intermediate level. They worked for a few years before leaving, on marriage or in order to look after the home. These women are the priority target group of the Catalan Institute of Technology. The highest level of female unemployment is in fact seen in the 30-54 age group.

The pre-training runs for a total of 80 hours, divided into two modules. The first seeks to give women confidence in their own abilities. They are taught job search techniques, how to write a c.v. Each woman is asked to define a "personal action programme". The second module gives an introduction to new technologies. After completion of the two, participants are offered practical experience.

Once this pre-training has been tried and tested, the Catalan Institute of Technology intends asking other associations of women and other institutions to take up the task, developing in their turn this initiative.

Catalonia

TRAINING AREA

Pre-training for women in new technologies

TARGET GROUP

Unemployed women wanting to return to work after devoting time to their families.

PARTNERS

Catalonian Institute of Technology
European partners: "Bureaux réseaux" in Liège, "Dimitra" in Athens, "AUEF-DTP" in Dublin, "Lycée technique arts et métiers" in Luxembourg.

FUNDING

The Regional Council of Catalonia (Directorate General for Employment) and the NOW Community Initiative.

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3. INTEGRATION

The need for mixed skills: technical know-how and communication

The Institute of Information Sciences, an offshoot of the Greek Centre ELKEPA, has listened to the needs of companies. It identified strong demand for new qualifications in the area of leading-edge technologies: cross-disciplinary knowledge combining technical know-how with communication skills. On the basis of this study, the Institute has created a special training course for out-of-work women graduates.

ELKEPA is a public centre set up by the Greek government in the 1950s to boost the productivity of the national economy. It recently set up, as an offshoot, an "Institute of Information Sciences". This Institute has played a key role in the introduction of new technologies in Greece. Among other tasks, it is specialised in studies, surveys and training.

The Institute of Information Sciences felt it necessary to undertake special training helping women to seize the opportunities offered by new technologies. However, under this general theme of "new technologies", the Institute still had to identify actual market needs, before carefully defining the training content responding to these economic requirements.

The Institute sounded out the views of employers, including many SMEs that have an urgent need for new qualifications. This analysis revealed strong demand for people that can grasp the all-round needs of the company, exercise supervision tasks, advise customers and link up to other networks....

In other words, employers are looking for people with a mix of qualifications, combining both technical and communication skills. In addition, companies seek people who can work in a group and communicate easily.

The Institute was thus able to draw up an outline of the exact objectives for the training of women in the area of "telematics and telecommunications". The course, lasting 1,200 hours, is intended for unemployed women or women returners with a university degree.

This training project has received support from the NOW Community Initiative. Through NOW, a cooperation network has been established between training bodies pursuing the same goals in different European countries.

Cooperation is not limited to the exchange of information between those conducting the training. It ensures that the European dimension is right at the heart of training. Course participants have carried out study assignments in other European countries. One training module thus dealt with the political and social context of the European Union, following the signature of the Maastricht Treaty.

Athens

TRAINING AREA

Training in telematics and telecommunications

PARTNERS

Network of European partners (coordinated by CREW): in Germany, Belgium, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Greece.

FUNDING

ELKEPA and the NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Unemployed young fema university graduates

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A step on the ladder to family helper training

How can women who are poorly qualified and experiencing social difficulties acquire the diploma of family helper? In the French-speaking part of Belgium, the sector's social partners have agreed on a set of pre-training activities.

In Belgium, family helpers have the task of assisting families in difficulty or elderly people. They work in people's homes or in institutions. This is a profession responding to a real social need and offering employment opportunities to women with little prior training.

Several routes to qualification exist for older women wishing to train as a family helper, including training courses with the approved services, and social advancement classes.

The problem is that a great many of these women (often with a low initial educational level) fail to make the entrance grade. Many have had a chequered past and have difficulties getting to grips with the discipline of education. For example, in one Liège training centre, of 125 women taking the entrance exam only 25 were accepted for the course and only 4 of these obtained the final certificate.

The motivation of these women to train needs therefore to be bolstered. This is the aim of the pre-training projects set in motion after an agreement within the (private) sector of family helps in the French-speaking Community of Belgium. Thanks to this agreement between social partners, funding was released under the "Positive Actions Plan" of the Fund for Employment of the Ministry of Employment and Labour.

Nearly 100 women (60% of whom were living on minimum social benefit) took part in eight weeks of foundation training in various Belgian cities. This made a considerable contribution to the success of further training.

However, gaining the qualification does not solve all the difficulties. A survey of family helps has revealed the drawbacks of this profession, where "you work alone", where women are often subjected to "unacceptable remarks", "insults" or even "sexual harassment". This is why the "training of trainers" has begun in the framework of the agreement between social partners. The aim is to train experienced family helps or social workers to help colleagues cope with the negative sides of their profession.

French-speaking Community

TRAINING AREA

Pre-training facilitating later qualification as a family help

PARTNERS

The social partners of the private French-speaking sector of family helps. Action coordinated by the association GRAPAF, under the wing of the management-labour commission.

FUNDING

- The "positive actions plan" of the Fund for Employment;
- The Community programme NOW

TARGET GROUP

Poorly qualified women in social difficulty

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3. INTEGRATION

Keeping a close eye on the job market

The Dutch "Annie Van Dieren" school mainly trains immigrant women and women returning to the labour market after long parental leave. The school keeps close watch on the evolution of the employment market, matching its training modules to the fields where qualified workers are lacking. The results speak for themselves: 80% of the participants found a job after taking the course.

The Annie Van Dieren school in Tilburg opened its doors in 1985. However, the roots of the project date back to 1984, when the first vocational training centres for women, created at the instigation of women trade unionists, were established. There is now a vocational training centre for women in almost every region of the Netherlands.

Every year, between 115 and 120 women come to take a course in Tilburg. The majority of them are women wishing to return to the labour market after a gap of several years spent bringing up children, or immigrant women. Since each category is different, courses are based on a formula of personal development. The school takes account of any special wishes expressed by the women.

At the final count, all the women stand a good chance of finding paid employment. This is because the vocational training modules are chosen to coincide with areas where a lack of qualified labour exists. Developments on the local employment market are closely monitored and reflected in the training given.

When demand is perceived, for example in catering or tourism, the school adapts its teaching programme to include the specificities of these sectors. Training i therefore given on the basis of demand i industry. Upon completion of the course participants are obliged to do some in company work.

All of the training has a practical focus concentrating on the actual exercise of th profession. In addition to theory, compan visits and practical exercises are organ ised. The approach is a clear success, wit 80% of participants finding fixed employ ment. Year after year, the Annie Van Die en school adjusts its courses to marke needs, after consultation with employ ment agencies, representatives of busines and trade unions.

Tilburg

TRAINING AREA

Reintegration in the world of employment through development of personal skills

PARTNERS

The vocational training centre for women "Vrouwenvakscholen"

FUNDING

"Arbeid's Voorziening", a support organisation for the unemployed

TARGET GROUP

Immigrant women, women wishing to go back to work a ter long maternity leav and/or time devoted to bring ing up their children

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Success story spreads like wildfire

In Hilversum in the Netherlands, the "Vrouw en Werk 't Gooi" training centre set up training courses for women wishing to return to work after a period bringing up children. These courses were then extended to immigrant women. The method taken is original, involving the consultation of the women involved. It has now been adopted by 55 centres in the Netherlands.

In the sixties and seventies, Europe "imported" immigrant workers to make good its own shortage of labour. Today, it is work that is in short supply. Often unqualified, immigrants are the first to be hit by economic crisis. Among them, women are the worst off. Restricted to housekeeping and bringing up children, not always fluent in the national language, they have greater difficulties in finding work.

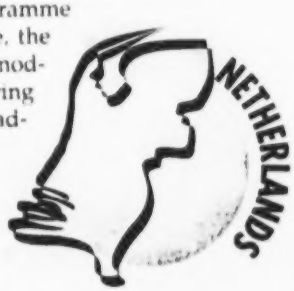
In Hilversum, immigrant women wishing to enter the employment market are assisted by the "Vrouw en Werk 't Gooi" centre. This women's training centre first launched special courses for immigrants in 1989. Both the methodology and the teaching techniques are geared specifically to them.

The centre devotes special attention to the participants' cultural background. As a consequence, preliminary discussion is a vital feature. This puts trainers in touch with the women's real problems and enables them to adopt a tailor-made response.

Rather than the women adapting to the course programme, the programme adapts to them. For example, the course includes a language module. This module is used during the first phase and allows gradual integration of immigrant women into the actual training. The course runs over a total of eight months.

This tailor-made training technique has in fact been tried out since 1982, when a group of women finding it impossible to integrate into the employment market opened the "Vrouw en Werk 't Gooi" centre. At the time, it was intended for women wishing to return to work after bringing up children. From the outset, courses were tailored to individual needs. Attention is thus given to the work pace. Women need to become (re-)accustomed to working. The programme (400 hours over five months) starts out at a smooth and unhurried pace, gradually leading participants on to a professional way of working.

The approach is indisputably successful. In the Netherlands, 55 "Vrouw en Werk 't Gooi" centres are currently applying it. In Hilversum alone, nearly 600 women take the course every year. 85% of them go on to find a job or continue their studies.



Hilversum

TRAINING AREA

Reintegration into the world of work through the fostering of personal and social skills

PARTNERS

Vrouw en Werk 't Gooi

FUNDING

The regional agency for employment (Regionaal Berstuur of Arbeid Voorziening)

TARGET GROUP

Immigrant women, women wishing to return to work after long maternity leave or a period bringing up children

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3. INTEGRATION

How to change mentalities ?

In Sicily, women are relatively well educated. And yet, they are harder hit by unemployment than men. Because of this an effort must be made to integrate them by tackling the various obstacles to employing women. A step in this direction has been taken by the CGIL trade union, through two projects in the provinces of Caltanisetta and Messina.

The "training" section of the CGIL in Sicily is very concerned with the issue of equal opportunities. In recent years, initiatives in this area have flourished. One such is a training course held in 1991 and 1992, a project involving some 800 women.

This strong trade union activity is related to the specific situation of the island. Like the rest of the Mezzogiorno, Sicily suffers from a high rate of unemployment, compared with the more industrial North. While Sicily's activity rate is slightly above the Mezzogiorno average, its rate of female activity is below the average for the south of Italy!

In Sicily, there is an especially big gap between unemployment amongst men (12%) and amongst women (32%). This situation is all the more abnormal since women are relatively well educated in Sicily. Among unemployed Sicilian women, over half have a diploma equal or superior to upper secondary. It is mentalities that stand in the way of women gaining access to interesting jobs and instead being offered jobs for which they are overqualified.

The CGIL has closely analysed these data. It is convinced that, on the training front, the focus should be on women's level of integration.

The union is consequently focusing its initiatives on two contrasting areas. The first is the province of Caltanisetta, and more precisely the city of Gela: an area dominated by the petrochemical industry, where many women are out of work. The second is the province of Messina, a more agricultural region where more women work, but in casual jobs.

In Gela, a 300-hour course will be run to give women the knowledge needed to set up their own business. At the same time, an observatory of female employment will be set up, helping identify sectors where employment opportunities exist.

In Messina, the training project will consist firstly of research on the textile sector, where the majority of women work without a contract or social protection. Training will then be given to women trade unionists, encouraging them to launch equal opportunity initiatives. Finally, an observatory will be opened, to monitor the various projects.

Sicily

TRAINING AREA

Training designed to increase women's chances of integration: through the creation of businesses by women and action by women trade unionists in the area of equality of opportunity

TARGET GROUP

Unemployed women and women trade unionists

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PARTNERS

The Sicily CGIL

FUNDING

The Sicily CGIL

P47: training on a grand scale

Following the adoption of a law by the Danish parliament, a three-year training programme was launched for long-term unemployed women with few qualifications. New teaching methods and organisation forms were tried out, with the ultimate objective of their application on a larger scale in vocational training centres.

"Women are hit the hardest by unemployment, and yet they represent the greatest workforce potential". This is one of the statements in the preamble to the training programme P47, adopted by the Danish Parliament in 1988. The programme, initially run for three years, was intended for adult, long-term unemployed women with very few qualifications and wishing to return to work after bringing up children or experiencing various difficulties. This large-scale programme was implemented by the Danish Labour Market Authority in 14 vocational training centres.

The programme filled a gap in Denmark. The vocational training centres work more with semi-qualified people. While some projects had been run with poorly qualified unemployed people, they were an exception in the 1980s.

P47 sought to work in a more systematic manner, defining a teaching method which could then be generalised. The training was exclusively open to women. It lasted for a year, at the pace of 40 hours a week. This is sizeable compared to similar initiatives.

Contrary to the usual practice of training centres, P47 courses were not split into modules but took the form of integrated units, facilitating self-responsibility among participants. The teaching model was also highly original. The starting point was the women's past history. They were taught to solve a problem from beginning to end. The atmosphere was one of trust, of wanting to learn. Teachers did not just dispense classes. They were also advisors, a listening ear.

The courses were adapted to the needs of five professional sectors (seen as "male" jobs) where prospects were good: metalwork, electronics, stock management and transport, tourism and the environment. Three periods of in-company training were included.

At the end of the experiment, P47 was carefully analysed. Two thirds of the women on the course found a job. 27% of them were taken on by the company which had provided the work experience. In addition, 13% of employers acknowledged that they had changed their views after seeing the trainees at work. Company heads now accept that women are perfectly capable of doing "men's" jobs.

TRAINING AREA

Training revolving around the active involvement of women in five professional areas with employment potential.

TARGET GROUP

Long-term unemployed women, with low qualifications and mostly aged between 25 and 39

PARTNERS

The Danish Labour Market Authority
The Ministry of Labour
14 vocational training centres for adults
Trade unions, associated at local level
Employers, offering in-company experience
The University of Roskilde that evaluated the programme

CONTACT

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Women engineers: preparing the ground in secondary school

An extremely low percentage of girl school leavers opt for training in engineering in Ireland, wrongly seen as a "man's job". Such stereotypes can only be overcome by attacking the issue at secondary school level. The Dublin Institute of Technology has consequently set up a training initiative for young girls in secondary schools.

In Ireland, only 4% of working engineers are women. This extremely low percentage results from the low attraction of women to the profession, seen as a "man's job". For example, in the 1992/93 uptake of students for the preliminary engineering degree, only one woman enroled, compared with 42 men. This low percentage is worrying, for the jobs of the future will be in the new technological sectors. Women therefore run the risk of being excluded from this market.

A number of studies have been conducted in Ireland, notably by the University of Limerick, to identify the reasons for this phenomenon. They highlighted the stereotyping already present in basic training, with engineering seen as a "dirty" job, "not for girls". And yet the results of girls in science at school match those of boys. Where, then, does the problem arise? One reason is a lack of effort to steer secondary level girls towards technical professions. Boys' schools tend to place more emphasis on the scientific disciplines than the schools attended by girls.

In order to stimulate women's interest in the profession of engineering, action must consequently be taken at the secondary school level. This is one of the aims of the training programme set up in 1993/94 by the Dublin Institute of Technology in the framework of the NOW programme.

It has launched two initiatives. Firstly two-week summer courses for girls at secondary level. These courses are introductory, designed to stimulate interest in engineering studies at a later date. They give information and assistance in understanding technical engineering, and explain the links between the practical and theoretical aspects of the profession.

The second initiative - "Promoting Technology to Women" - is targeted on young women aged under 25 who have completed secondary education but did not make the grade in science subjects. Consequently, they cannot win a place at the Institute of Technology. This second course runs for a year, with 25 teaching hours every week. If the women successfully complete the training, revolving around workshops and with relatively few lectures, they can begin first year engineering studies.

TRAINING AREA

Training seeking to encourage women to go on to higher education in engineering

PARTNERS

Dublin Institute of Technology
Project set up with partners in Spain, France, Germany and Scotland

FUNDING

NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Girls reaching the end of secondary level or who have completed their studies but did not make the grade in science subjects

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Two-way effort to change attitudes

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has launched a far-reaching project to promote employment of women in jobs traditionally done by men. The Unions are pursuing this objective from all angles, and are also seeking to drum up interest among employers and training centres. If equality is to make headway, it must be approached from both the employer's and employee's standpoint.

The "Non-Traditional Women" project (NTW), spanning 1993 and 1994, is coordinated by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and supported by the NOW Community Initiative. The keynote of the project is the promotion of training for jobs that have not traditionally been done by women in Ireland: gardener, painter, plumber, carpenter, driver, surveyor, etc.

The project is innovative in that it strives to link up all the elements in the chain. If women are to take up jobs traditionally done by men, the issue must be approached from both the employer's and employee's standpoint. NTW aims to provide information, advice and training. It is targeted on unemployed women, women returners, women wishing to progress in their careers. The project spans a wide partnership: employers, training centres and local centres for the unemployed. NTW also seeks to encourage trade union delegates to put the question of non-traditional jobs for women on the agenda.

Activities cover the range of economic sectors. At the beginning of 1994, training activities were organised for different groups of women, with the cooperation of three companies in three different sectors: Team Aer Lingus (aviation), R and R Donnelly (printing) and the Cork Co-Op Butchers Society.

At the same time, workshops are planned on the theme of promoting women in non-traditional jobs, with the coordinators of 30 local Centres for the Unemployed. A data base is moreover being set up, containing information and statistics on women and non-traditional skills and opportunities.

To maximise the efficiency of this decentralised action, a Project Manager has been appointed by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. An advisory group has also been established, including the Irish Business and Employers Confederation, the State Training Agencies, the Construction Industry Federation and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. In addition to support for the various projects under way, this group strives to liaise with employers and training institutions to develop employment opportunities for women in non-traditional areas.

TRAINING AREA

Training activities forming part of a general awareness-raising strategy among women in non-traditional jobs.

TARGET GROUP

Unemployed women, women in the workplace

PARTNERS

Irish Congress of Trade Unions
State Training Agencies (FAS and CERT)
The Construction Industry Federation

FUNDING

Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the NOW Community Initiative.

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Award-winning results for "Women in Management"

British Gas Southern has run a training programme - Women in Business - designed to give women the same career opportunities as men. Its results exceeded all expectations, and one participant even won the 1990 "Woman as Manager" Award.

In 1988, the company British Gas Southern noted that its internal promotions were essentially going to men. Few women were confident enough to apply for a senior position. The company decided to take action. Under the banner of its equal opportunities policy, it introduced a special internal training programme, open to employees, middle and senior management.

The course sought to develop women's confidence and their personal skills. Women were encouraged to pinpoint their strong points and build a career plan around this.

The training was divided into two modules: one of three days and the other of two days with an interval of 12 weeks between for reflection.

The results were spectacular. The number of women applying for and being appointed to supervisory and managerial positions increased dramatically.

For example, in 1988, 14 women applied for management posts, compared with 163 men: a proportion of 8%. Two years later, 56 women applied for the same job, compared with 115 men: a proportion of 33%.

This trend has been seen at each level in the company. At supervisory level, the proportion of women applicants has risen from 46% to 61% and the number appointed from 59% to 67%. At middle management level, the number of women appointed has risen from 19% to 49%.

In other words, 59 of the 107 women who took part in the training over two years have been promoted, 11 twice.

These results won the company the "Lady Platt Award for Equal Opportunities Training" and in 1990, one of its managers won the "Woman as Manager" award.

Southampton

TRAINING AREA

Fostering of positive personal attitudes and cultural change in a traditionally male domain, policy aiming at career development for women

TARGET GROUP

The company's women employees

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PARTNERS

The training department of British Gas Southern

FUNDING

British Gas Southern

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Women take the driving seat in car selling

All over France, the Women's Institute for Car Selling is training women seeking their first job or returning to the employment market. The innovative feature of this project lies in the effort to integrate women in what is considered a male preserve. The impact is so great that the network is expanding throughout Europe.

In 1988, automobile manufacturers created a training course in car selling techniques. Institutes were set up within the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Avesnes, Fougeres, Millau, Nimes and Versailles. Caen, Chartres, Nancy and Strasbourg then joined the network; Lille is planning to do so.

All are open exclusively to women jobseekers, for several reasons. Firstly, because car selling continues to be a male-dominated domain. Secondly, because when women do have access to this profession, they are often better at it than men. Finally, because women put across a different image of cars. In addition, a need for successful sales staff was emerging.

The project seeks to integrate women in a new professional sphere. Fortunately, the social partners are fully committed to its aims. The training course is in fact promoted in the framework of an agreement between employers and trade unions, through the intermediary of the National Council of Automobile Professionals.

Those giving the training are also professional car salespeople. They teach sales techniques specifically for cars...and for women. Men and women in fact have a different approach to selling a car. Many customers are not used to meeting car saleswomen. They are often dismissed as the receptionist. Women must react in the right way to this dismissive attitude.

Training covers both theory and practice. It includes classes at the Institute (960 hours) and also eight weeks' practical experience in branches or dealers, plus one week's practical experience in another European Union country.

The results speak for themselves. Since 1988, around 600 women (15 per session) have been trained in France. 80% of them have found a job, 60% in the automobile sector. Only 20% are no longer working for family reasons.

Further proof of success: the Women's Institute for Car Selling is exporting its know-how to Germany (Potsdam, Leipzig, Dillingen), Belgium (Ghent), Spain (Seville, Zaragosse, Valladolid), the United Kingdom (Coventry), Ireland (Dublin) and Portugal (Lisbon).

Avesnes, Caen, Chartres, Fougères, Millau, Nancy, Nimes, Strasbourg, Versailles and Lille (on the drawing board)

TRAINING AREA

Development of positive personal attitudes and cultural change in a sector (automobile) previously only open to men

PARTNERS

Local automobile manufacturers and dealers in association with the trade union organisations

FUNDING

NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Women entering the labour market for the first time and women returning to work after bringing up children

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Men and Women: working together For equality

In the French department of Ain, a Professional Equality Plan has been signed within the Manducher factory, with the aim of giving maximum career opportunities to its women workers. At the same time, male workers are also able to broaden their professional horizons. Men and women: the entire corporate culture must be transformed.

Eurotec-Manducher is one of the leading French companies in the manufacture of plastic technical parts. The company employs 1,765 people, 27% of whom are women. But only a tiny proportion of them are in supervisory posts. Many fall into the worker category, particularly that of unskilled worker.

The Women's Rights Office of the Ain department thus made a big effort to convince the factory management and the trade unions (CGT and CFDT), who are consulted before any initiative, of the need for a policy to promote equality of opportunity. In 1993, an agreement for such a policy was signed.

The decision was taken to organise training to ease the access of women to jobs traditionally held by men. This focused on technical knowledge and on their career evolution prospects.

At Manducher, equality of opportunity is broadly interpreted. The initiatives must help both women and men to develop their career opportunities. The company is therefore not working in one direction, but in a mixed environment. Each worker - male and female - should find something that suits him or her in the much wider range of opportunities offered.

At the same time and in light of the difficulties encountered in changing mentalities, courses promoting knowledge of the equality strategy are run for supervisory managers and heads and for staff managers. Everyone in the company is involved.

The scheme is beginning to pay off. Women are now to be found in traditionally male-dominated jobs, such as painting or forklift truck driving. Job adjustments led to the creation of the first woman "mould preparer".

The training courses are now taken by almost as many women (108) as men (123). In 1991, one training course had six women workers and 137 men....

Oyonna
(department of Ain)

TRAINING AREA

Development of positive personal attitudes and culture change in a traditionally male dominated worker category

PARTNERS

The company Manducher in association with the trade union organisations (CFDT and CGT)

TARGET GROUP

Female and male employees of the company

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Women at the wheel: a safer workplace for all

The Belgian company FERRERO has set up a special course to teach women to drive fork-lift trucks. For the women, this means a more stable job. Women drivers are also an advantage for the management, for women drivers mean fewer accidents.

FERRERO is a confectionary company, established relatively recently in Arlon, a small rural town in the south of Belgium. Work in the factory is seasonal. At certain times of the year, the workforce doubles. The majority of permanent jobs are held by men. Women, usually less well qualified, have the least job security.

Mentalities had to be changed and women given opportunities to re-train in order to correct this inequality. In March 1992, a collective bargaining agreement was signed in the company, defining a number of objectives in the area of equality of opportunity. The existence of the agreement made it possible to obtain funding in the framework of a sectoral Fund for the Food Industry.

One of the issues covered in the agreement is the training of fork-lift truck drivers. Correct handling of this machinery is vital for FERRERO and this post can bring access to more interesting jobs. But women had reservations about driving a forklift. "I don't like driving a car, let alone a forklift", they commented.

The "positive actions" working group set up within the company consequently decided to train women as forklift drivers. They began by training an in-factory instructor. This has the advantage that the women do not have to travel to another town for training. It saves time, a precious commodity for women who, after work, often have to tackle the housework. As it happened, the measure (an in-factory instructor) turned out to be equally beneficial for men taking the course.

The training of forklift drivers and the other courses introduced at FERRERO are the result of trade union pressure. The employer was not particularly keen. However, a change is in the air. A glance at the statistics of insurance companies convinced the management that it also stood to gain. Women drivers of motorised equipment are in fact more careful than their male colleagues and cause fewer accidents in the workplace....

Arlon

TRAINING AREA

Train women employees to drive forklifts. This requires a change of mentality and of the corporate culture.

PARTNERS

The management and trade union organisations of the confectionary company FERRERO.

TARGET GROUP

Poorly qualified women working under temporary contracts or on a seasonal basis

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The need for targeted actions

The "Berliner Wasserbetriebe" took advantage of a re-organisation of its services to analyse, sector by sector, the breakdown of men and women in the company. A patchwork situation emerged. The company believes that targeted action is required to correct the imbalances. Several training projects have been run, with complementary objectives.

The "Berliner Wasserbetriebe" is the Berlin public water board. After the fall of the Wall, the company had to undergo a complete re-organisation. In 1992, it merged with its eastern counterpart. This provided an opportunity to overhaul its services.

Management took the opportunity of analysing staff breakdown, branch by branch. This detailed study revealed flagrant discrepancies. Women make up 42% of the total workforce. They hold nearly two-thirds of administrative posts but only a quarter of the more technical jobs. In the supervision division, the difference is even more marked: only 7% of women achieve a position of top responsibility.

In 1993, a new law on equality of opportunity was adopted in the Land of Berlin. It obliges companies to earmark part of their turnover for positive action in favour of women. For its part, the "Berliner Wasserbetriebe", following on from the study the previous year, decided to take targeted action. Two separate training programmes are in place, pursuing complementary aims.

For secretaries, a seminar is held twice a year. It aims to make women more aware of their skills and highlight the opportunities for career advancement. In the first year, 98 women took the course. 166 have applied to take part in the subsequent seminars, reflecting the impact of the initiative!

The other project introduced by the company management seeks to encourage staff to move into more technical jobs. This course is also open to men. It includes classes in computer technology and communication techniques. Part of the training is given in-company, part in outside centres.

In order to facilitate staff participation in these various courses, the management has put in place several support measures. Childcare is available for women with children. Part-time jobs can be obtained relatively easily by women who so wish. Finally, training is also available to help the smooth reintegration of women returners.

Berlin

TRAINING AREA

Make women aware of the possibilities for career advancement, encourage them to go for more technical professions

PARTNERS

Berliner Wasserbetriebe

FUNDING

Funded by the company itself

TARGET GROUP

- Women secretaries
- Women employees

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Looking to new horizons

The Spanish Programme "A Voyage of Career Discovery" pursues two complementary aims: encourage unemployed women to turn their attentions to traditionally male-dominated sectors with good employment prospects; and help women to map out their training route in line with personal choice.

The "Voyage of Career Discovery" is unique in Spain. Promoted by the National Institute of Employment and the Institute of Women, the project reached nearly 3,000 women in 14 regions of the country between 1992 and 1994.

It is open to adult women, either long-term unemployed or returners coming back after looking after a family. The project falls into the sphere of pre-training, seeking to guide women towards one of seven job areas where clear employment possibilities exist: construction, electronics, computer technology, the automobile industry, industrial, service and repair mechanics and new services to raise the quality of life. These are all traditionally male sectors.

In each region, four of these seven fields have been selected, in line with the characteristics of the local job market. During the pre-training stage, women take a 120 hour course, in the form of four 30-hour modules. They are thus given an introduction to each profession and can then make a choice in line with personal preferences. At the end of the course, women decide to either go for training in the field chosen or opt for immediate job search in this sector.

The women trainees boost their chances from several standpoints: through diversifying their skills in non-traditional professions and through turning their attention to sectors with employment potential.

The "Voyage of Career Discovery" programme also strives to boost women's self-confidence. This is pursued by means of practical experience, through highly tangible activities. The teaching resources (written and audiovisual material) were designed with the close involvement of trade unions.

Mention should finally be made of the fact that this project is supported by the NOW Community Initiative. In this capacity, it forms part of a European network (the SOPHIA network), also including partners in Belgium, Greece and Portugal.

TRAINING AREA

Pre-training designed to ease integration into one of seven traditionally male sectors with employment potential

PARTNERS

In Spain: the National Employment Institute (INEM) and the Institute of Women.
In Europe, in the framework of the SOPHIA network: FOREM (Belgium), OAED (Greece), IEFP (Portugal).

FUNDING

INEM
NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Unemployed women

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Women apprentices in traditionally male sectors

The ZAHNRAD association in Hamburg runs a preliminary training course aiming to encourage young women to opt for an apprenticeship in traditionally male sectors. The trainees learn how to operate in a "male domain" and to overcome certain apprehensions and inferiority complexes.

"Zahnrad" means cogwheel and is the emblem of the technical professions. It is also the name chosen by a Hamburg-based association, aiming to "promote the acquisition of professional qualifications in traditionally male sectors by women and girls".

The ZAHNRAD association was opened in 1987 by women technicians who had encountered many problems of sexual discrimination in the work environment. Its project encourages girls at the end of the compulsory schooling period (16 years old) to opt for an apprenticeship in sectors previously considered to be "male": woodwork, metalwork, electricity.... These are sectors where women make up a minute minority (in 1990, 9% in Germany).

The preliminary training runs for 11 months, during which theory classes are interspersed with practical experience. In-company, girls are introduced to a workshop environment and learn how to handle machinery. More especially, they are taught how to operate in a typically male domain and to overcome certain apprehensions. They learn to stand up to sexual harassment, to "say no" and not to have an inferiority complex. The preliminary training also looks at some problems that could affect women more particularly, such as noise levels in the workplace.

The ZAHNRAD project has been an indisputable success. 78% of the participants in the preliminary training found an apprenticeship or a job in one of 33 technical and industrial companies in contact with the association in the Hamburg region.

The association recently decided to extend the scheme to immigrant young women with a chequered school background. The teaching manuals are translated into Polish, Turkish and Kurdish...to give parents an insight into the pertinence of the training. In many cases, young immigrant women are in fact barred from training by their parents.

Over and above this training project, ZAHNRAD is working at Länder and federal levels to bring together associations pursuing the same aims. The ultimate aim is to exercise more political pressure to change mentalities and laws....

Hamburg

TRAINING AREA

Preliminary training to encourage girls to take an apprenticeship in woodwork, metalwork or electricity

PARTNERS

- 33 companies in the Land
- Organisations in Denmark and Ireland pursuing the same aims

FUNDING

- The Hamburg Employment Office
- The Federal Ministry for Women's and Youth Affairs
- The Community programme PETRA

TARGET GROUP

Initially, girls on completion of compulsory schooling. Now extended to immigrant women.

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Petra: inspiration from transnational exchanges

How can girls be encouraged to train for jobs in the metalworking sector? A number of obstacles must be overcome. In the framework of the PETRA programme, a cooperation project has been run between Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. This transnational project made it possible to compare experiences and map out new possibilities for action.

Women are few and far between in the metalwork sector, due to a combination of several factors. Girls are not attracted to training in this sector, particularly in view of the negative image they have of these professions.

Another reason for girls' lack of interest lies in the poor job prospects offered by existing training courses. Women often run into deeply rooted prejudices and pre-established behaviour patterns at recruitment stage. It is a fact that women with the same qualification as men have more difficulties in getting a job. As a consequence, the rate of female unemployment in this sector is much higher than that of men.

With the aim of improving women's access to the metal working trades, a European project was run in the framework of PETRA between 1988 and 1991. It sought to foster the exchange of information and young people from country to country. The promoters of the different projects were also given an opportunity to meet and see what was being done elsewhere.

This partnership included projects in Germany (Audi AG), Belgium (Institut de formation postscolaire de l'industrie des fabrications métalliques) and the Netherlands (0 + 0 Foundation). Each of them had an individual outlook, a specific context. Each had its own approach to the issue, its own training methods.

In Germany, where a lack of qualified staff existed, the project focused on the recruitment of girls and the introduction of qualified women into certain departments of the company. In Belgium, the project was targeted on young women who had left school at a very early age. It formed part of a strategy to improve the apprenticeship system. At the same time, specific recruitment methods and awareness-raising measures were adopted. In the Netherlands, the project was for poorly qualified girls aged 15-18. Special training methods in the metalworking trade were developed for them.

This diversity was the partnership's key feature, given that the primary aim was exchange and transfer of ideas, methods and approaches, based on the strong points of the various partners. Everyone drew maximum benefit from the experiences acquired by others.

TRAINING AREA

Establishment of an information system between various training modules, with the aim of encouraging young women to consider a job in the metalworking sector

PARTNERS

Audi AG (Germany), the "Institut de formation postscolaire de l'industrie des fabrications métalliques" (Belgium) and the Stichting "0 + 0", Opleiding en Ontwikkeling in de Metaal en Electrotechnische Industrie (Netherlands)

Germany/Belgium/ Netherlands

FUNDING

European programme Petra

TARGET GROUP

Young women

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Women as the starting point for action

The Equal Opportunities Working Party set up within FORD MOTOR decided to begin its work by consulting the women directly concerned. It is thus holding exploratory interviews, followed on by discussion groups. Women are closely involved in the definition of action priorities.

FORD MOTOR Company Limited employs around 800 women. On the joint initiative of the Ford management and the staff union, an Equal Opportunities Working Party has been set up within the company. Its brief is to identify and examine the factors that influence the progress of salaried women employees. For this, the Working Party has agreed to use a participative planning method, "Metaplan" approach.

Prior to defining an action or training plan, the women's opinions are sought, drawing on their personal experiences.

The work method comprises a number of phases. In the first, a representative sample of 10 women are to be interviewed, in order to identify their perceptions of the company and their working environment. The interviews, lasting for around an hour, will be conducted by a consultant.

The main results of the interviews will be analysed in greater depth during discussion group sessions, involving 12 people and running for half a day. The company's women employees are informed that they can take part in these collective discussions if they so wish. In all, the group discussions should involve some 100 women in the company.

Around twenty men will also be invited to debate the same subjects. This will make it possible to compare replies.

During the sessions, staff members are directed towards discussion and exploration of broader issues, rather than individual grievances. All opinions are anonymously expressed.

The outcome of these discussion groups will be used by the Working Party as the basis for recommendations. These will be forwarded to the management, the trade union and also to the Joint Staffs National Negotiating Committee (JSNNC).

In addition to this participative planning initiative, a training seminar has been held on Racial and Sexual Harassment for the members of JSNNC.

TRAINING AREA

Opinion surveys and group discussions designed to involve women in the definition of recommendations with a view to favouring their promotion within the company

PARTNERS

FORD MOTOR Company Limited, Manufacturing Science Finance (MSF) and the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU(ACTS))

FUNDING

FORD MOTOR Company Limited

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TARGET GROUP

Women working at different levels within FORD MOTOR

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Training for women trade unionists: like a snowball

The Confederation of Workers' Commissions (CCOO), in cooperation with the UGT union, is organising training in 9 Spanish provinces designed to transform union members into "equal opportunities officers". 18 women were first trained at central level before going on to train other trade union groups in each province.

The project to train women trade unionists as "equal opportunities officers" was launched by the Confederation of Workers' Commissions in April 1991. Over time, the initiative has been extended to another Spanish union, the UGT, and has been brought under the wing of the European Initiative NOW.

Through this project, the two unions want to stimulate women members to set up projects in favour of equal opportunities in the workplace. This is achieved through the training of "Equality Officers" who go on to train other women trade unionists. Little by little, a network of projects is thus gradually being established.

The project has been implemented in four autonomous communities considered as having development problems: Galicia, Pais Valenciano, Andalucia and Castilla-La Mancha. In the first phase, the two trade unions drew up economic studies (two regions each), thus enabling later adaptation of projects to the local situation.

The second phase got under way at the beginning of 1993. Nine women from each union (i.e. 18 in all) were selected for training as "equal opportunities officers". They came from nine provinces in the four priority regions. They were given 140 hours of classes, divided between four modules and spread over four weeks.

In April 1993, the third phase followed: each trained member was asked to train other groups of women trade unionists at province level. These women were either unemployed or seeking to advance within their company. In most cases, their skill level was low.

The central aim of this training is to enable participants to pinpoint discriminatory situations in the work environment and provide the impetus for positive action. They should also be in a position to identify new job opportunities, in accordance with which unemployed women can then be trained. Finally, the project underlines the importance of incorporating anti-discriminatory clauses in collective bargaining agreements.

Through this snowballing process, 150 women trade unionists have already been trained in the nine provinces. The courses run every fortnight and have flexible time arrangements, adapting to the participants' availability.

Galicia, Pais Valenciano, Andalucia, Castilla-La Mancha

TRAINING AREA

Training of "Equal Opportunities Officers", through training for women union members who then disseminate this to other groups of women

PARTNERS

Confederation of Workers' Commissions, UGT
Project involving European cooperation with the Portuguese UGT and CGTP and with the CGIL (Italy)

FUNDING

Ministry of Employment and Social Security
NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Women trade unionists

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Better work organisation improves quality and the environment

Women working in a Danish fish processing factory have been given training in a new organisation of work. In order to raise the quality of production and improve environmental protection, repetitive tasks were reduced and the onus placed on workers' ability to take the initiative.

The KRAM project was implemented in 1993 in two of the sites (in Fredericia and Kolding) of the company RAHBEKFISK, a factory processing fish into ready-made meals. 300 people work in these two factories, two-thirds of whom are women. These women work on the production line, carrying out repetitive tasks, and are under constant stress.

In Denmark, fish processing factories must respond to a number of situations. Employees are calling for better working conditions. Consumers want higher quality products. And government authorities are seeking to impose more binding environment al standards.

In response to this context, the RAHBEKFISK factory initially tried the traditional methods. It sought to improve quality and environmental protection in a basically technical manner, through the introduction of "clean technologies". The staff involvement aspect and the introduction of new forms of work organisation were however neglected.

The KRAM project thus took an innovative approach, linking technological efforts to staff involvement, drawing on the personal experience, skills and proposals of workers.

In the framework of KRAM, a training plan was drawn up at RAHBEKFISK, involving all 300 workers. The courses, given in small groups, ran for eight weeks and enjoyed the active collaboration of a team from the University of Aalborg. This team had conducted in-depth research into working conditions in fish factories. The results of this study were made available to the KRAM project. The University also provided assistance with the definition of the teaching tools used for the training.

Staff thus worked on diskette with five audit diagrams, laying out the conditions that would improve work organisation, quality and environmental protection. On the basis of this analysis, employees were asked to define action plans, termed "development rings".

Union representatives took part in the project. In particular, they checked that the system of "job rotation" was being correctly applied. This system, introduced by a new Danish law, provides for the replacement of staff away on training by unemployed people.

Fredericia and Kolding

TRAINING AREA

The training seeks to put in place a new work organisation, based on more rewarding tasks and an active participation of staff members

PARTNERS

The labour market office of Vejle, the vocational training centre, the RAHBEKFISK company and the University of Aalborg

FUNDING

The various partners listed above

TARGET GROUP

Women production line workers in a fish processing factory

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Looking to long-term career prospects

The training course organised by the Fyn savings bank in Denmark has quadrupled the number of women in managerial posts in the space of a few years. The secret of this project's success lies in a method encouraging the women to define a long-term career plan, flexibly integrating the different phases in their personal lives.

This project was initiated by the board of the Amtssparkassen Fyn savings bank, a regional bank on the island of Fyn at the heart of Denmark. The impetus came from management, aware of serious imbalances of the sexes in the company. The bank employs around 560 people, 57% of whom are women. But while 93% of these women are secretaries, only 5% hold senior managerial posts.

The management felt that this inequality was unacceptable, on grounds of both social fairness and economic profitability. More women in managerial posts is in fact a commercial must for the bank if it wants to attract more customers.

What steps could be taken to encourage the promotion of women within the company? The management took the time to look at the problem in depth. A working group, made up of managers and employees of the different departments, was created to identify the initiatives that should be launched. This group called on the services of an external consultant to help it in its choices.

The working group analysed the obstacles in the path of women's career advancement. It came to the conclusion that these obstacles result from a combination of internal and external factors. The women do not feel able to take risks (internal factor). They say it is difficult to assume a managerial job on a part-time basis, a necessity in order to spend enough time with their children (external factor).

The preliminary study of the working group made it possible to build up a training approach responding to the situation of the women in the company. It attempts to put across the concept that the advancement of a women in the company is not an "all or nothing" process. In her life, a women can go through several different phases. A career plan must be flexible enough to embrace these different phases.

Two residential courses (one three-day and one four-day) were finally organised for women wanting to become managers and for women managers wishing to move still further up the ladder. These courses are designed to help the women define a long-term career plan, successfully combining the company's needs with their personal situation.

This training, the fruit of careful reflection, has given remarkable results. In just a few years, the number of women managers at the Fyn savings bank has increased from 5% to 20%.

Island of Fyn

TRAINING AREA

Encourage women to assume posts carrying more responsibilities in the company, through the definition of a long-term personal career plan

TARGET GROUP

Women secretaries and managerial staff of the Fyn savings bank

PARTNERS

A working group was set up within the company to organise training. It spans management and employees. An external consultant, "PROGRES", was also called in.

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The virtues of "soft" training

A new work organisation has been put in place for women workers at the DANPO poultry abattoir in Denmark. It eases the difficult working conditions, while raising the quality of production. This has been achieved through a training plan which boosts the women's self-confidence.

The experience of the DANPO company in Aars has served as a reference for the food industry in Denmark. This is a sector that, in the past, made no mention of training on its list of priorities.

DANPO is the biggest chain of poultry abattoirs in the country. Its headquarters in Aars specialises in ready made meals. 75,000 chickens are slaughtered every day. 225 people work in the abattoir, the majority of whom are unqualified women in "production jobs". When a man applies for a job at DANPO, he asks to be a driver or a warehouse worker. He rarely puts himself forward to decapitate chickens.

Under stress from these repetitive and unrewarding tasks, women rarely stay long at DANPO. Staff turnover is very high. The company therefore decided to launch training activities with the aim of encouraging staff to stay. To achieve this, workers had to be re-motivated and the work organisation completely overhauled in the company. An additional aim was added along the way: limitation of salmonella risks and tightening of hygiene standards.

Unqualified women were thus offered access on a voluntary basis to a training course, run by the local vocational training centre, AMU. It took the form of successive modules of 37 hours. The trade union organisations, involved in the management of the AMU centre, played a full role in this process.

During the first course, participants learnt to draw up their plan of the "ideal abattoir": the best way of fully understanding how an abattoir is organised. The second course placed the emphasis on preparation of the finished product and questions of hygiene in the food industry. Throughout the training, great emphasis is attached to the concepts of communication, cooperation and understanding of the quality issues.

One of the project's original features was that, unlike traditional approaches, the training sought to give a mixture of technical and more general knowledge.

The training has given tangible results. Task rotation, sought by management, has been facilitated. Women have improved their work organisation and quality has risen.

Aars (near Aalborg)

TRAINING AREA

Training designed to overhaul work organisation, through the active participation of women and better understanding of the general operating environment

PARTNERS

- The vocational training centre AMU
- University of Aalborg that conducted a study on how to change the work of unqualified women in industry
- Trade union organisations

TARGET GROUP

Women workers in a poultry abattoir

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Changing the technology, not the workforce

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Friswit laundry (Belgium) decided to equip itself with new machinery and a more sophisticated technology. Rather than laying off unqualified women workers, it introduced a training programme. In its wake, several new career prospects opened up to women.

The laundry sector employs many underqualified workers in Belgium, a high percentage of them women. The industrial laundry Friswit in Hoogstraten is no exception. 95% of production tasks are carried out by poorly qualified women.

These women were at risk of losing their jobs due to the need to replace the laundry's equipment. None of them had the necessary new technology skills, in particular computer literacy.

Rather than laying them off, the social partners jointly decided to set up a training course designed to raise their qualifications level.

A working group of union and management representatives was thus formed. It operated in the framework of the "positive actions plan" designed to promote equality of opportunity through training. This plan followed on from an agreement adopted on February 7, 1991 by the Labour-Management Committee of the laundry sector.

These "positive actions" in favour of "risk groups" are financed by the National Fund for Employment. This Fund is constituted by levies (0.25% of the wage bill) paid by employers.

The basic computer training dispensed in the framework of the Friswit "positive actions" project pursued several aims. It sought to give the women a qualification and make them more polyvalent. It aimed to guarantee job stability. In addition, it enabled women to obtain positions of responsibility.

At the same time, 25 unemployed women were trained, for the purposes of replacing people on a career break or having taken early retirement. A training programme tailored to the company's needs was set up for them. Many women now operate the automatic or computer machinery without difficulty.

Hoogstraten (Antwerp)

TRAINING AREA

Positive action and training leading to a qualification, designed to avoid laying off of staff upon foreseeable technical changes

PARTNERS

The social partners (management and unions) in the framework of the Labour-Management Committee of the laundry industry

FUNDING

The Fund for Employment

TARGET GROUP

Poorly qualified long-term unemployed women and the female employees of the company

CONTACT

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ANTICIPATION

A Swedish training model for qualifying women workers

Swedish trade union and employers' confederations joined forces to define an "ideal" training model for unqualified women workers. The employment of a local woman coordinator, acting as an interface between the trainees and the training promoters, turned out to be a key factor in the success of the initiative.

In industrial companies, women generally hold the least well qualified jobs. As a consequence, when restructuring takes place, they are the first to lose their jobs. However, if these women are given training to raise their level of qualifications, they do just as well as men. All that they need is a little encouragement, a push in the right direction.

In Sweden, the Employers' Confederation and the Trade Union Confederation (LO) reached agreement on a joint pilot project. The aim was to test out an ideal training model for women workers, offering increased protection against unemployment.

The training took place in the district of Blekinge in 1990 and 1991, an area with a high concentration of industries employing poorly qualified women workers. It was coordinated by the vocational training centre of the town of Ronneby.

The women who took the course came from five local companies that wished to participate: ABU Garcia, Cetetherm, Facit, Mölnlycke Tissue, Tarkett.

It ran for 18 weeks, including a first week of "guidance" to overcome a number of psychological obstacles. The technical elements were adapted in line with the needs of each partner company. They notably included Swedish and mathematics: subjects in which all the participants needed some "refreshment".

The evaluation of the initiative showed that the existence of a local coordinator greatly contributed to its success. The coordinator was responsible for the day-to-day contact with the women trainees. She settled general running problems and made an effort to fit hours to suit everyone. At any point, a participant could speak to her about a personal problem. During the course, zero absenteeism was registered: a success clearly tied in with the existence of this coordinator.

Despite the recession in Sweden, all of the 10 women found more interesting jobs within their company after the course.

Following on from this first experience, the Volvo factory in Olofström ran two training modules, drawing direct inspiration from the Blekinge model. Other companies have expressed an intention to follow suit.

District of Blekinge

TRAINING AREA

Training to raise qualifications level and avoid unemployment

TARGET GROUP

Women workers

PARTNERS

The Confederation of Employers and the Confederation of Trade Unions, in collaboration with five companies and the Ronneby vocational training centre

FUNDING

The employers, the Regional Council for Employment and a Social Fund jointly managed by the national employers' and union confederations

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New technology training: tailor-made for women

The introduction of new technologies in companies leads to the unemployment of many women. It can however be avoided by action on the vocational training front, provided that this is preceded by careful pedagogical reflection. In Athens, the ADA centre has launched a training programme for trainers incorporating such reflection.

What measures can be taken to ensure that women are not hit harder by unemployment when a company decides to computerise? How can women be encouraged to adopt a more positive attitude to the emergence of new technologies?

The problem is that men and women take a different approach to learning new technologies. If women are to be motivated, a separate educational approach is required in order to register results.

This is the attitude adopted by ADA, the Technology Training Centre for Women in Athens. A non-profit association, ADA has been responsible since 1994 for the "training of trainers" in the field of new technologies. The project is implemented under the auspices of the European programme NOW.

In the framework of this initiative, 12 unemployed women have begun the theory and practical classes that will transform them into trainers. At the end of their training, they should be taken on by ADA or by one of five similar centres in Greece.

The training given to these women is the outcome of careful consideration of the teaching method. In fact, while men take a more empirical approach to computer technology (push the button and see if it works), women like to know the operating rules and understand the overall logic of the system.

Teaching methods must be adjusted to these behavioral differences. The courses for women should strive to develop their creativity, imagination and team work. They should incorporate elements such as personal experience or the socio-economic context. Another principle of ADA: the women must be involved in the definition of the programmes and must approve their content.

PARTNERS

In the framework of the NOW programme, ADA works with three European centres: the Bremen Berufs-Bildungs-Institut, the Frankfurt Softwarehaus von Frauen für Frauen und Mädchen and the Newham Women's Training and Education Centre in London.

FUNDING

- The Greek organisation for labour force employment - NOW

TARGET GROUP

Unemployed female graduates

TRAINING AREA

Training of women trainers in new technology, using adapted teaching methods

CONTACT

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Part-time work is not a handicap

The Finistère Social and Agricultural Mutual Insurance Fund is seeking to promote women's access to supervisory posts. In a sector where men pull all the strings, the project strikes an original note, taking account of women's specific needs. Maternity or part-time work do not prevent access to training or promotion.

The Finistère Social and Agricultural Mutual Insurance Fund is responsible for the social security of farmers. But while both men and women pay contributions and enjoy cover, in reality the Fund is managed by men. Women have failed to attain posts with any degree of responsibility. They however make up the bulk of the employees in "production" services.

Women would like to break out of the confinement of junior posts. As a consequence, the CFDT union and the management decided to place the question of professional equality at the heart of the company's annual negotiations. In 1991, a framework agreement was signed, establishing a training programme for women. Since this date, the management and union have been jointly monitoring its application.

The agreement falls under the law of July 13, 1983 on professional equality. This law gives social partners the right to negotiate measures helping women "catch up" in the areas of recruitment, training and working conditions.

At the Mutual Insurance Fund, the first aim was to raise the qualifications level of women and thus help them climb the career ladder. The specific situation of women had to be taken into account for achieving this goal. Steps had to be taken to ensure that maternity or part-time working did not create barriers to training.

Support measures were put in place. If a training course cannot take place in the region, compensation is paid. The courses also make allowance for the hours of part-time workers (99% women): if the training runs over their work time, the overtime is made up or even paid. Finally, when a woman is on maternity leave at a time when she had planned to take a course, she is given priority access to it on return to work.

These measures have paid off. In three years, the situation of women has improved. The number of women supervisors has increased by five and the number of women taking training has outstripped the number of men. This promotion of women is not however at the detriment of men, whose situation remains stable.

Landerneau (Finistère)

TRAINING AREA

Training support, allowance made for the specific situation of women (maternity leave, part-time work) in a male dominated sector

PARTNERS

The Social and Agricultural Mutual Insurance Fund in collaboration with the CFDT (the trade union in the company)

FUNDING

The French state via the Ministries for Health and for Urban Areas

TARGET GROUP

Women employed in the company

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Childcare paves the way to training uptake

The Edinburgh Women's Training Centre in Scotland runs training programmes for women in computing and electronics. To encourage women to take up the training opportunities, a number of support measures are in place, including the funding of nursery places and the payment of registered childminders.

The Edinburgh Women's Training Centre was established in 1985. Since then, over 240 women - around thirty each year - have followed the training programmes in computing and electronics, both traditionally male dominated sectors.

All of these women were aged over 25. They were either unemployed or faced barriers to employment and training: women belonging to ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, few or no qualifications, single parents or women aged over 40.

They all took a one-year full time course, incorporating a 3 month work placement. Extensive consultations with employers from the computing and electronics sector convinced the Centre that it should strive to become an accredited training centre and it is now well on its way to achieving National Certificate Validation.

Today, the majority of the women participants have put failure behind them. Of the women who trained in computing and electronics, 50% are in employment and 37% are taking complementary courses or applying for further training.

These results were made possible by a number of support measures adopted by the Centre. Top of the list comes the payment of nursery or childcare provision for participants' children. The only condition is official registration. All attempts are made to find childcare in the trainees' home area.

This makes transport arrangements simpler, particularly when the trainees are out on work placements. Between March and October 1992, childcare was provided for 54 children - 13 in full-time nurseries, 11 with childminders and 30 in after school and holiday care.

Edinburgh (Scotland)

TRAINING AREA

Training of women in traditionally male dominated skills, support measures in the area of childcare

PARTNERS

Edinburgh Women's Training Centre

FUNDING

The European Social Fund and Edinburgh District Council

TARGET GROUP

Unemployed women aged over 25

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On-site nursery opens the door to training

The South Glamorgan Women's Workshop in Wales trains women in electronics and computing. To ensure that women with children can take the courses and are not irretrievably excluded from the labour market, the Workshop has its own on-site nursery.

With the demise of the coal and steel industries, the county of South Glamorgan in Wales has undergone far more dramatic restructuring than elsewhere in the UK. Economic development has switched its emphasis to the service industries, high technology, computing, engineering and electronics.

All of these sectors require a qualified workforce. Training courses have therefore been put in place, including the South Glamorgan Women's Workshop. The Workshop was opened in January 1984 to provide training and work experience in computing and electronics for women.

The centre is only open to women aged over 25. The majority of them left school early with few or no formal qualifications. Many also have difficult family circumstances. Some belong to an ethnic minority, others have a disability. Many of them have not been in paid employment for a long time and are dependent on social security.

In a nutshell, it is not easy for these women to return to education, particularly when they have young children. Without childcare, they have no hope of taking a course.

The Workshop consequently provides an on-site nursery for children from 6 weeks to 5 years. 24 places are available; all are earmarked for the children of course participants. While their mothers are in class, their children are looked after by five skilled nursery nurses.

The Workshop is unique in Wales. Since the opening of the South Glamorgan Women's Workshop, over 2,500 women have been trained. 40% of them take advantage of the childcare facilities.

Cardiff (Wales)

TRAINING AREA

Training in new technologies

PARTNERS

South Glamorgan Women's Workshop

FUNDING

The European Social Fund and South Glamorgan County Council

TARGET GROUP

Women over 25. Among this group, priority is given to unemployed women, women from ethnic minorities, poorly qualified women, single parents and women returners.

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One-stop shop for rural women

Women living in rural areas often encounter major difficulties in returning to work after having children. They have to cope with problems of transport, childcare, access to a training centre. The Warwickshire Rural Enterprise Network has set up a pilot centre that provides all the services women need under the same roof.

A woman wishing to go back to work after a period bringing up children faces a great many difficulties. When in addition the family lives in a rural area, the problems are accentuated. Getting to a training centre means coping with long distances and a lack of transport. She has to find some kind of childcare, something (even!) more difficult than in urban areas. All these handicaps are heightened by a sense of isolation from the world of work and a lack of self-confidence.

In the area of Stoneleigh, the Warwickshire Rural Enterprise Network (WREN) has set up a community centre providing women with all the services that they need under one roof. WREN, an offshoot of the National Rural Enterprise Centre, works with women out of work for over a year and wishing to return to the employment market.

The first step in the right direction is taken with a course on self-employment and business creation. Various skills, such as communication techniques, economy and management are taught, over a period of three months. The hours (9.30 am to 2.45 pm) are designed to fit in with the school timetable. Women with children under five enjoy access to a nursery, close to the training centre.

Another notable feature is that women can work from the community centre after completing the course, using its space and technical facilities. A data bank is available to help them make contacts and they can continue to use the services of the nursery. Former participants not working from the centre are invited for a cup of coffee every Tuesday to exchange their experiences and provide mutual support.

In two years, 34 women have been trained. All completed the course. And already half of them have set up their own business.

Warwickshire

TRAINING AREA

Training in business creation

PARTNERS

National Rural Enterprise Centre (member of the Royal Agricultural Society).
At European level, cooperation with rural associations: Almansur (Spain), AFIP (France), Terras Dentro (Portugal)

FUNDING

Coventry and Warwickshire TEC
NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP

Women returners in rural areas, unemployed for over a year

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A University reaches out to unemployed women

The technical university of Osnabrück near Brunswick trains unemployed women in office automation and computing. All efforts are made to facilitate life for the participants: flexible hours, grants for childcare. The initiative thus demonstrates the compatibility between work and family.

The department of pedagogy of the Osnabrück technical university conducted a study on the labour market in Lower Saxony. While the region is highly industrialised - it includes the Volkswagen complex - women are seriously affected by unemployment. The majority are trained for administrative tasks and thus enjoy less job stability. They must be trained to move up company ranks, to jobs for which greater demand exists.

Reacting to this research, the technical university set up its own training project, designed for women with a higher education degree who have never worked. Many of them have children. Two courses, each of around 900 hours, are offered and can be combined. The first covers communication and office organisation and administration. The second, more complex, looks at new data processing techniques. In both courses, the emphasis is placed on group work and on participation by trainees, including in course definition.

Every attempt is made to make the training accessible to women. Classes last for three hours every day, giving the participants time to look after their children. Participants are moreover given a grant for childcare during the training hours.

At the end of the course, trainees are not simply "let loose". The university gives them access to a data bank of job vacancies, thus assisting them in job search. The results are positive. In 1993, at the end of the courses, over half the 139 participants found a job.

The positive effects are not only "quantitative". Several women also felt that the training had helped them cast off certain inhibitions. At the beginning, they thought they would never be able to work more than part-time, in view of their family responsibilities. The course made them more confident. They realised that being a working mother is not the end of the world and felt capable of taking on a full-time job.

Osnabrück (Brunswick)

TRAINING AREA

Courses in office automation and computerised data processing.

TARGET GROUP

Women graduates who had never worked, with dependent children

PARTNERS AND FUNDING

Federal Ministry of Research and University Education
Federal Employment Office
NOW Community Initiative

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Support continues, even after training

In the region of Rome, AF FORUM trains immigrant women in setting up their own business. On completion of the course, they are not just left to their own devices. A support structure exists to help them in the difficult phase of business start-up.

Immigration has grown substantially in Italy in recent years, notably with an influx of people from outside of Europe. Non-Community immigrants make up 76% of the foreign population. In this group, only 15% have steady employment. Foreign women experience even greater difficulties in finding a job than men.

The establishment of small businesses can be an excellent way of integrating these women into social and professional life. But women cannot just "have a go" at running a business. They need support and the necessary training.

The training for immigrant women is provided by the association AF FORUM, based in the Rome region, which groups together a university, large companies, research and vocational training centres and the regional authorities. It has long-standing experience in support for business creation.

On this specific project, AF FORUM worked with associations of immigrants in order to select people for the training. Participating women must either be without work or in an unstable job. They must originate from a non-Community country, speak Italian and already have some basic qualifications.

The first courses in "creating self-employment" got under way in 1994, taking the form of 20 hours of training over 16 weeks. The timetable is flexible, separating class work from outside contacts, making it easier for trainees to fit the course in with their family responsibilities.

The course is just the first step. On its completion, women are not just left to their own devices. A "tutoring" structure exists to help them in the business creation stage. This stage has many pitfalls that can floor a fledgling business. Two months after the launch of the micro-business, fresh evaluation takes place with the women. If their project is having trouble getting off the ground, they are offered more specific training.

Latium

TRAINING AREA
Support to business creation

PARTNERS
AF FORUM, for participant selection, working in cooperation with immigrant associations
European cooperation with a French partner, IRFED

FUNDING
Region of Latium
Ministry of Labour
NOW Community Initiative

TARGET GROUP
Non-Community immigrant women, without work or in an unstable job

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Key words

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Target group(s)

Young Women

- at school ... 40
- leaving the school system ... 16, 28, 43, 48, 49
- (long term) unemployed ... 16, 29, 43

Women Workers

- with low or no qualification ... 15, 18, 19, 21, 41, 45, 46, 50, 54, 55, 56, 58
- with a good or high qualification ... 15, 19, 20, 22, 41, 42, 44, 46, 50
- full-time employed ... 15, 17, 23, 38, 42, 44, 51, 52, 53, 58
- part-time employed or on fixedterm contract ... 15, 21, 38, 45, 53, 58

Women returners; on career break: (longterm) unemployed; who have never worked before

- with low or no qualification ... 14, 26, 27, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 41, 43, 47, 51, 55, 59, 60, 61, 63
- with a good or high qualification ... 25, 30, 34, 36, 41, 43, 47, 51, 61, 62

Specific Groups

- women in rural areas ... 32, 38, 61
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- disabled women ... 26, 59, 60
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SOCIAL DIALOGUE

JOINT OPINION

WOMEN AND TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education and training is recognized by the Social Partners as one of the key elements to the success of the Single Market. In an increasingly competitive market, it is vital to have a highly skilled work force in order to avoid skill gaps and to counteract potential labour shortages[1]. As the Social Partners already stated in a previous Joint Opinion[2], "completion of the internal market strengthens the case for increasing investment in and access to training and improving the quality and quantity of training measures". Given that women are playing an ever increasing role in the economic and social development of the European Community, it is important to improve and develop where necessary their vocational education and training on an equal footing with men so that they can contribute fully to the success of the Single Market.

In the Joint Opinion on Education and Training (19 June 1990), the Social Partners have already proposed that "policies promoting equal opportunities for men and women and, in particular, the participation of women in all training schemes, especially those linked to the occupations of the future, should be developed and specific measures should be devised as regards training for occupations in which women are under-represented." In this Joint Opinion, the Social Partners wish to further advance proposals to improve the vocational skills of women through education and training.

Considerable improvements have been made to legislative provision concerning equal treatment for women in vocational training and employment opportunities in the European Community in recent years. Legal rights and protection for women have been extended. Furthermore, there is ample empirical evidence that women's participation in the labour market has increased and that their career opportunities have improved in the EC over the last decades. There is also a trend towards diversification of girls' vocational choices which improves their prospect on the labour market.

These positive developments and trends need to be accelerated and reinforced by complementary action focussed on specific target groups who need special support. Public authorities, including educational institutions and training organisations at all levels, as well as employers and trade unions have an important role to play in this respect. The media has also a significant contribution to make in this respect.

It is important to recognise that the position of women in the labour market is strongly influenced by cultural attitudes which prevail in society in general but in particular in families, education, enterprises and trade unions. These cultural attitudes still result in both structural and attitudinal barriers to women's integration in the labour market. On the one hand, outdated assumptions by parents, teachers, employers and trade unions about the role of women in society can limit women's expectations of their potential career opportunities. On the other hand, both the care of children and adult dependents, as long as they remain essentially the respon-

[1] Ecosoc Information Report on Vocational Training - «The promotion of vocational qualifications - An instrument for the economic and social development of the European Community» - CES 587/92 final.
It is widely agreed that high quality skills are of strategic importance for EC integration.
The boost business productivity and competitiveness, improve workers' living and working conditions and enhance their employment prospects.

[2] Joint Opinion on ways of facilitating the broadest possible effective access to training opportunities, 20 December 1991, preamble § 4.

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sibility of women, put structural constraints on women's labour market participation and career progression. Furthermore, while there is no legal discrimination in access to training for women, the Social Partners acknowledge that in practice women do not participate equally with men in vocational training and believe that they can play an important role in promoting open-minded and positive attitudes and behaviour towards women on the labour market and in society.

While recognising the scope and complexity of the issues involved, the Social Partners acknowledge their responsibility in supporting employment and training policies, both in the workplace and outside that will secure gains for women by opening up wider training and career development opportunities.

There is a series of pressing arguments for a focus on women and training in the decade to come.

Demographic changes imply that, in the long run, there will be insufficient young people entering the labour market to meet demand. It is also the case that, numerically, women will be a highly significant group in the labour force of the 1990's. They already constitute the majority of the new job holders and new labour market entrants in the Community[3]. They also comprise the majority of the unemployed, and the principal source of untapped available labour supply in the future. Providing opportunities for women and encouraging them to improve and diversify their professional qualifications will contribute to ensure the necessary equilibrium between supply and demand in the labour market. Women's participation at all levels and in all sectors of the economy will also contribute to greater balance in every aspect of life.

As a consequence, it is vital that public authorities, the Social Partners and other actors, each according to their own responsibilities, enable and encourage all such categories of women to participate in relevant initial and continuing vocational training e.g.

- those entering the labour market for the first time,
- those in employment at all levels, regardless of legal status, including temporary, part-time and fixed-term contract workers,
- unemployed women,
- women returners,
- women in rural areas.

Nowadays, in most European countries, women generally obtain a high level of educational achievement although in a more limited range of subjects than men.In spite of efforts having been made to diversify women's vocational choices and thereby improve their integration into the labour market, women are still mainly trained and employed in either low-skilled occupations or in areas of skilled employment predominated by women. Resulting from this, their opportunities are often limited to female dominated sectors[4]. Women's professional choices are limited by this clustering in female dominated sectors. Greater progress needs to be made by schools, public authorities, enterprises and trade unions, each according to their own responsibility, in providing opportunities and in encouraging girls and women so

[3] Between 1985 and 1990, two-thirds of new jobs created in the Community were taken by women.

[4] Gender segregation persists in all EC countries and women are concentrated in fewer economic sectors than men.

that they participate in education and training for occupations which give them access to a wider range of future oriented, high-skilled employment.

The need for the EC's economies to undergo industrial restructuring in order to gain in competitiveness means that there will need to be a smooth reallocation of workers from surplus to deficit sectors: This will be essential for a successful economy. Gender segregation based on vocational orientation contributes to a major labour market rigidity. It impedes the smooth reallocation of workers and contributes to unnecessary unemployment, short-term skills mismatches and longer-term skills gaps. Special training support is necessary to overcome this segregation[5].

In this context, it is necessary to adopt an innovative approach to the participation of women in general education and vocational training activities, including in enterprisebased training programmes. This approach must respond to the varying attitudes, abilities, motivations, expectations and cultural experiences on the part of women themselves and provide training appropriate to their respective needs and to the needs of the market. Improving the skills of women in the labour market, through vocational training, will contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity in the workplace, as well as to the better use of human resources.

Finally, the Social Partners would like to call on all actors, including women themselves, to assume their own responsability with regard to existing initial and continuing training opportunities.

LINES OF APPROACH

1. The Social Partners believe that the skills potential of women should be maximised as a labour market resource.

2. Women's participation and position on the labour market are not determined solely by economic factors but are also influenced by cultural attitudes. Therefore, the Social Partners consider that there is a need to promote cultural and social change to ensure a positive and progressive environment.

3. The Social Partners support measures, at all appropriate levels, which would allow women to participate under the same conditions as men in vocational education and training investment aimed at upskilling the labour force.

4. The Social Partners agree to work towards encouraging full participation and integration of women into all occupational areas and levels. This will facilitate a more beneficial use of human resources. Training as a means of improving access opportunities for women to employment and promotion opportunities for women is not only compatible with but essential for the economic advance of the European Community.

5. The Social Partners believe that innovative measures should be taken, both inside

[5] These views are supported by the OECD whose 1992 «Women and Structural change», recorded,:
«The solution to economic problems depends on enhancihng women's economic role. Women are a key resource that is currently under-utilised both quantitatively and qualitatively».

Similarly, the EC Standing Committee on Employment (1991) recognises the important role women will play in economic and social cohesion :
«Better qualitative and quantitative integration of women into both long term employment and posts involving responsibility is an important factor for the Community's economic and social cohesion».

and outside the work place, particularly in schools, to diversify vocational choice among girls and women, by means of guidance measures directed towards a wider range of future-oriented careers. Measures should be taken to encourage participation on an equal footing of women and men in education and training programmes, thereby improving their opportunities for greater participation at all levels of the enterprise.

6. The Social Partners consider that this overall approach needs to be underpinned by a wide range of positive support initiatives to include care of dependents and where necessary further publicity campaigns to increase general awareness.

7. In order to achieve lasting success in women's vocational diversification, all those concerned, including employers and workers and their representatives should take the necessary steps to facilitate the integration of women in enterprises which still have a predominantly male work force today.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Member States and the Community should continue and develop positive strategies to promote women's training leading to a wider range of employment opportunities and career progression.

2. In order to ensure greater transparency and matching of women's skills with labour market demand, the Social Partners recommend to the Community and public authorities that steps should be taken to compile existing relevant information and, where necessary, to provide further information about labour market prospects and training possibilities for women. Such information should cover both the different levels in the Member States and the Community programmes. Attention should be paid to special target groups e.g. women returners to the labour market, and unemployed women who need to change their vocational orientation.

3. Measures should be taken to promote access on an equal footing for women and men to vocational training. It has been observed in many cases that the appropriate choice of the selection criteria applied and the resources made available for training programmes have increased access of women to vocational training. The Social Partners recommend that such practices be encouraged and developed at all levels, within private and public enterprises, at local, regional, national and Community levels.

4. The Social Partners recommend that, in the design of training programmes, due consideration should be given to the need for women and men to combine work and family responsibilities. In this context, the appropriate use of open and distance learning programmes combined with support at local level should be examined.

5. The Social Partners wish to explore ways in which the role of SME's in vocational education and training can be enhanced, e.g. through the use of incentives.

6. A compendium of examples of good practices should be complied at Community level based on an analysis of valuable experience gained across the Community. This compendium should be developed within the framework of an ad-hoc group under the supervision of the Social Dialogue and be directed at providers of education and training and policy makers at all levels.

7. At Community level, urgent steps should be taken to ensure greater coherence, transparency and better coordination between Community funded programmes contributing to the training of women, both in the T.F.R.H. and in the Social Fund, including effective monitoring and evaluation procedures.

There should be a periodic publication of a simple guide to all the potential Community sources for funding of women's training. Information should be provided on access to such programmes. Particular efforts should be made to ensure that the projects funded comply with established non-discriminatory selection criteria which effectively lead to an improvement in the occupational position of women.

8. As part of the process of cultural change affecting both men and women, the Social Partners recommend that :

- gender prejudice be eliminated from subject choice and teaching methods (e.g. school text books) in educational establishments;

- trainers and managers, be made aware of potential barriers to the integration of girls and women into a wider range of technical and future-orientated occupations, where necessary through the introduction of specific modules concerning relevant legislation;

- the media should also contribute to this cultural change.

9. In addition to the recommendations already set out in Joint Opinions*, the Social Partners wish to draw attention to certain issues of particular importance for the training of women.

School curricula should provide a broad basic education which enables girls and boys to make career choices based on the full range of employment opportunities. An effective and well-resourced vocational guidance service including a European dimension should be available to all pupils.

10. Effective counselling and guidance facilities need to be provided in order that women, as well as men, at all stages of their education and working lives should have complete and up-to-date information about training and employment prospects. This should be undertaken through further cooperation between the Social Partners and all the relevant institutions and

*1. Joint Opinion on Education and Training (19 June 1990)
2. Joint Opinion on the Transition from School to Adult and Working Life (5 April 1991)
3. Joint Opinion on Ways of Facilitating the Broadest Possible Effective Access to Training Opportunities (20 Decembre 1991)
4. Joint Opinion on Vocational Qualifications and Certification (13 October 1992).

should also involve the European Commission.

11. Measures and initiatives to advance training and employment opportunities for women so that they are on equal footing with men need to continue at all levels. Further progress needs to be made in advancing mainstream training opportunities for women workers.

In the context of the European Social Fund, the Social Partners strongly recommend the continuation of specific measures targetted at women with special needs (e.g. women returners, unemployed women undergoing retraining). The Social Partners also recommend measures that guarantee much greater participation by women in co-financed ESF mainstream programmes. The same consideration and recommendations apply to other EC education and training programmes, including qualification initiatives.

12. The Social Partners note that many initiatives, including agreements in some Member States have been developed concerning vocational training opportunities for women. They welcome these initiatives and recommend that this approach be extended further where appropriate. Existing evaluation studies of these initiatives should be compiled and analysed at European level in order to provide a basis for discussions about good practice and further initiatives to be developed throughout the European Community.

13. The Social Partners agree to follow progress on issues concerning women's vocational education and training resulting from this Joint Opinion.

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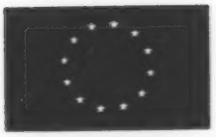

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